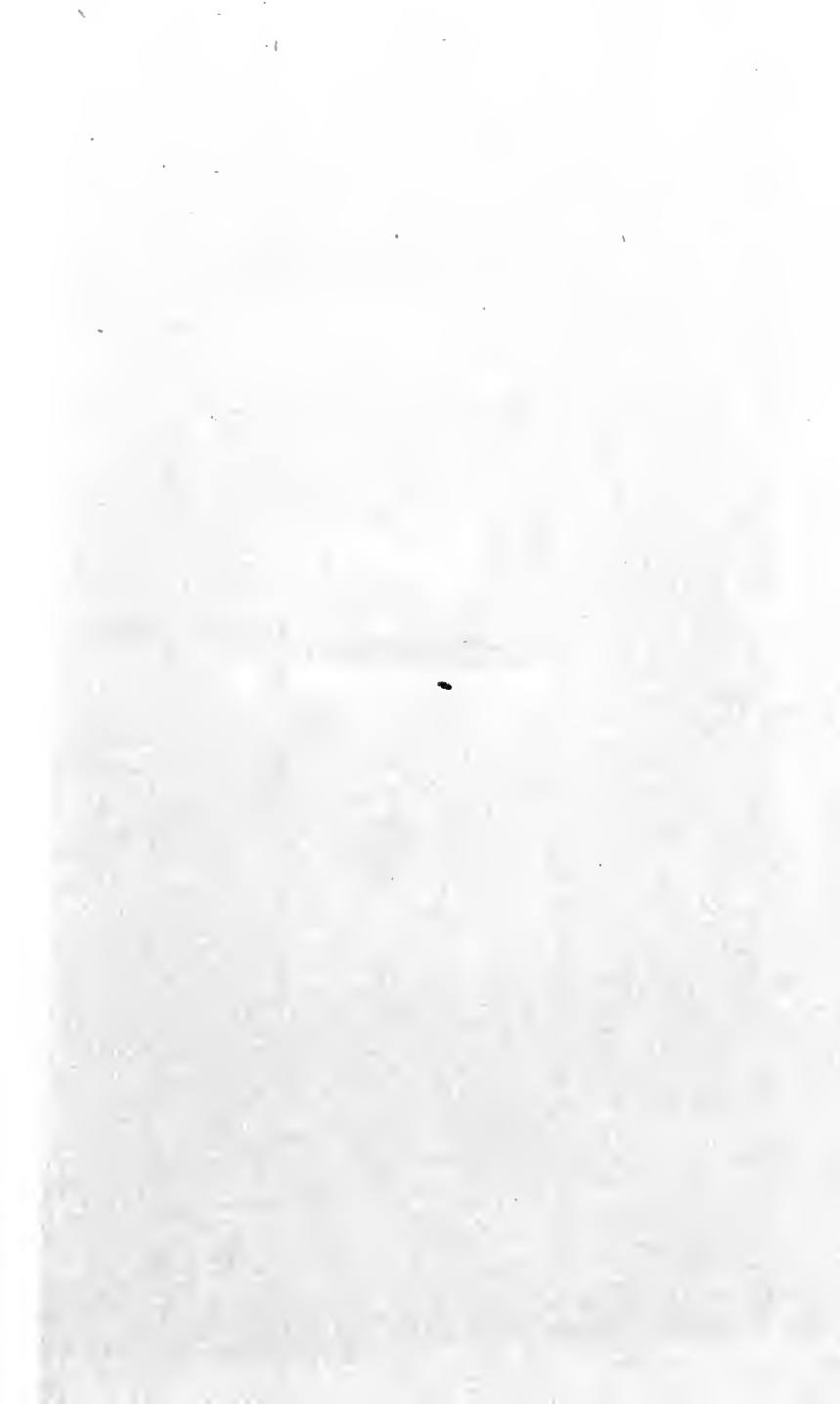




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1525
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TO

*All the Lovers of those
Short, pithy, pointed, popular Maxims,
called "Proverbs."*

CONCEIVING that many of the rules by which you live are false and dangerous, and that rules of life both safe and true are to be found, I have thought it my duty to illustrate these positions by recording some of the events of my life, and, with much humility, to present the Memoir to you.

I am, &c.

THE AUTHOR.

May, 1816.

1525
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CHAP. I.

A FAMILY PICTURE.

OF my parents I can say very little, for they died before I was two years old. But of my aunt Winifred, to whom my father committed me on his dying bed, as she is likely to act a very prominent part in this history, I feel it right to say a great deal.—She was, then, a little, round, well-conditioned person, with a remarkable air of self-complacency. Her eye was rather dull; her mouth had that sort of gentle elevation of the corners, which is not an unusual symbol of satisfaction with ourselves, and of a kind of quiet contempt for others. She was neatness itself; so that if the Hin-

doos, who have, it is said, at least thirty thousand divinities, and therefore must have a god or goddess for almost every thing, should ever determine to erect a pagoda to the Goddess of Neatness, they would, I am persuaded, feel a very serious loss indeed in my aunt, as the priestess of it. She was, moreover, so remarkably punctual as to render any clock or watch almost unnecessary in the place where she lived. A modern philosophical writer, in illustrating the force of habit, mentions an instance of an idiot, who lived for many years in the same room with a clock, by which he was much interested. It was at last removed; but the poor creature, faithful to his loquacious friend, continued for many years to cluck for sixty minutes, and then to strike, in regular succession, the hours with his hand upon the table. Now, I do not mean to say that my aunt either clucked or struck for the benefit of the neighbourhood; but she did

did what was quite as much to the purpose. When, from Lady-day to Michaelmas, she appeared in fine weather at the sheep-fold (for she was scrupulously attentive to her health) to catch the morning breath of the sheep, it was precisely eight o'clock. When she stooped in the broad, sunny, gravel walk, to gather agrimony or rosemary for her breakfast, it was precisely nine. At five minutes after nine her bell rang—not for family prayers—I wish it had—but for Harry to bring Pug and two cats their breakfast. Exactly ten minutes after this, the first hissings of her own urn were heard; and, at precisely ten, this great business in the life of an idle person being accomplished, the breakfast vanished—crumbs and all.

My aunt was constitutionally cautious. The high sense she had learned to entertain of her own value to the community, had so strengthened this inbred tendency, that the greatest part of

every day was spent in considering how the rest of it might be spent in safety. Some of her neighbours were even scandalous enough to say, that, if she took a long journey, she was always "booked." And, as to weather, she was at once the barometer and thermometer of the neighbourhood in her own person. The minutest variations of cold and heat, of damp and dry, might be traced, with the greatest accuracy, in the colour and consistency of her shawl and gloves.

Having thus noticed her physical properties, I must now proceed to her moral qualifications. She was a person, then, as somebody says, "of more *temper* than *passions*." The first discovered itself so strongly in the circle of the family, that, whoever else might question its energy, the footman, the housemaid, and the cook were never heard (though the subject was most dutifully made the perpetual topic of cuisinery discussion), to express a doubt upon the subject. As
to

to her *passions*, I really believe that the strongest was the love of herself, and of myself. I speak of this love of the two as a single passion, because, I think, she chiefly loved me as her own property—as the child of her own creation—as a piece of living clay, which her own plastic hands were in the act of moulding into man. I would not be ungrateful to her—nor would I for the world undervalue the labours and watchings of those who, through the years of infancy, warm us in their bosom, and gently lead us up to manhood. He is not a man, but a monster, who does not do justice to the tenderness of a mother, or of those aunts who have every thing of a mother but the name. But my aunt was so singularly selfish; her faults have inflicted such a succession of evils upon myself; and so entirely does my confident expectation of immensely benefiting the world by the relation of my own history, turn upon the develop-

ment of them, that I am compelled to state them, even at the risk of being deemed a very undutiful nephew. I ought, moreover, to say, that I do think, if my aunt herself were alive, she would, in pity to the countless generations of aunts and nephews hereafter to be born, desire me to proceed.

Accordingly, I go on to state that peculiarity in the moral constitution of the old lady, which has given a complexion and shape to most of the events of my own life—which has been, in fact, a sort of destiny, lashing me through a series of large and little occurrences, follies, and distresses; a very small portion of which are to be faithfully set forth in the following pages.—She was, then, *passionately addicted to proverbs*. *Her* whole life, and therefore *my* whole life, was governed by those maxims of life and manners which are in such general circulation, and are of such immeasurable weight in certain classes of society.

“ What ! ”

“ What ! ” it will at once be asked by
 a thousand profound moralists ; “ and is
 “ a reverence for proverbs imputed to
 “ this truly venerable person as a crime ?
 “ Are they not the ‘ treasured wisdom
 “ of ages ? ’ Do not the Greeks call them
 “ ‘ the physic of the soul ? ’ Is not the
 “ reputation of Phocylides, and Diogenes,
 “ and Isocrates, and Solon, and Thales,
 “ and a long list of worthies, chiefly
 “ built upon their proverbs ? Nay, was
 “ not Solomon himself a writer of Pro-
 “ verbs ? ”

Very true ; but the “ physic ” of the
 Greeks may not be suited to the con-
 stitution of the English. Wise heathens
 make very unwise Christians. And as
 for the “ Proverbs of Solomon,” I have
 observed that the lovers of other pro-
 verbs are very often the most ignorant of
 these. Thus, most certainly, was it with
 my aunt. She had no acquaintance with
 Solomon ; but with every uninspired
 oracle

oracle of this kind she had an almost incredible familiarity. She ate, she drank, she walked, she lived, and, what was worse, as I had no choice in the matter, she constrained me to eat, to drink, to walk, to live, by proverbs.

Now, as I owe much to my country, under the shadow of whose vine I have sat in safety for seventy years; and as, moreover, I am about soon to ask of her the additional boon of a space of earth in which I may lay my aged bones, I am anxious to do something for her benefit. And as although the history of Achilles, who was fed upon the marrow of lions; and of Romulus, who was suckled by a wolf, have been written; but the history of a person fed, nourished, and educated upon *proverbs*, has not been written; I think it my bounden duty to lay this narrative at the feet of my country, persuaded that she, who has not spurned a fallen usurper from them, but has
mildly

mildly bid him “ go, and sin no more,” will not despise this simple gift of one of the humblest and most affectionate of her children.

CHAP. II.

ANOTHER FAMILY PICTURE.

HE is a very unfortunate man indeed, who has but one aunt, if she is not more amiable than my aunt Winifred. But it was my happiness to have another, who, for her size, which was remarkably diminutive, was, I do think, one of the best creatures in the kingdom; and the extraordinary candour with which I have presented to the reader one family picture, of which the features are certainly not very creditable to the race and name, will, I trust, induce him to acquit me of all partiality in my sketch of the second.

My aunt Rachel then, was, by the church register, though not by the calculation of my aunt Winifred, at least twenty years younger than her sister.

It

It is remarkable, in how many instances the eldest child is neither the wisest nor the best. Perhaps, indeed, one solution of the fact is, that, just about the time at which parents become possessed of a second child, they begin to discover the immeasurable mischief of spoiling the first. But I leave solutions to philosophers, and simply state the fact, that such was the case with my two aunts. Indeed, I might briefly describe the younger as having all the excellencies, and none, or very few, of the defects of her sister. She was quite as neat, and nearly as punctual. Her temper was so sweet, that she was always known, among the unprejudiced members of the family, by the name of "Harmony." But what is most worthy of notice, as it respects the following history, is, that her repugnance to a proverb, or maxim, or any thing approaching to a neat, pointed, pithy, oracular, sententious saying, bore a pretty exact proportion to her sister's unbounded

unbounded reverence for them. Not that she instinctively abhorred them; for, by nature, I believe, every person loves a short sentence better than a long one; just as we should naturally prefer a bank-note to the same sum in Spartan money. But, to pursue the metaphor, she had so often suffered by the forgery of the notes, that she had learnt to prefer the cumbrous coin, with all its disadvantages, to its fictitious though plausible representative. Be that as it may, I can, even to this day, remember the sort of doubting, scrupulous, inquisitive countenance with which she was always accustomed to receive these dicta of her sister. She had too intimate an acquaintance with her sister's mind, and with the means of promoting truth and peace in the family circle, flatly to controvert these sayings. But I often observed, that, about five minutes after the oracle had delivered its sentence, aunt Rachel quietly slipped out some scriptural

tural quotation which bore no inconsiderable resemblance to the proverb, and which she endeavoured, almost imperceptibly, to substitute for it.

Now the rationale of this conduct of my aunt was, as I conceive, as follows. Proverbs, for the most part, either contain a portion of truth, or are true in some circumstances, and under particular modifications. The portion of truth conveyed in them is generally conveyed or implied in some passage of Scripture. My aunt Rachel then, by dexterously seizing upon the proper passage of Holy Writ, at once corrected the proverb, half satisfied her sister, established the truth, and set at ease (which was no easy matter) her own conscience.

I must add, however, that partly the constitutional mildness of Rachel—partly the irascibility of Winifred—partly the sordid fact that I depended for my fortune upon the elder sister gave such authority to the tones of the one, and such insignificance

insignificance to those of the other, that I, and others who were foolish enough to mistake confidence for sagacity, were accustomed to think Winifred a very wise aunt, and Rachel rather a weak one. —Nor is this a very uncommon case. “Why,” said a Prussian ecclesiastic of high rank to a celebrated actor—“Why, “when I and my brethren speak the truth, “does no one believe us; but, when you “speak falsehood, every one believes “you?” “Because,” he replied, “we “deliver falsehood as if it were truth; “and you, truth as if it were falsehood.” —I heartily wish that my aunt Rachel had lived to enjoy the benefit of this anecdote.

But, to proceed.—These complicated circumstances produced a remarkable state of things in the family. The point to be ascertained in any given case was, not what was best to be done, but what my aunt Winifred thought it best to do —or, in other words, as she rarely acted
but

but on the authority of a proverb, what she could find proverbial authority for doing. This being once discovered, I no more thought of resisting the will of my aunt, backed by a proverb, than a stone, when left to the influence of gravity, thinks of hesitating to descend. I spoke, thought, wept, laughed; and moreover refrained from speech, thought, weeping, laughter—all at her mighty bidding. Rachel, indeed, often whispered, nodded, sighed, or quoted, but generally in vain. I really loved her the best of the two; but all her dumbshew, sighs, whispers, and nods, had no point—had not the sanction of a proverb—and, moreover, had never the singular good fortune to be backed by a crown piece; and, therefore, had little or no authority for me.

Thus have I discharged the duty of introducing my two aunts to the public—a duty, indeed, from which I might have easily delivered myself, by suffering

ing

ing them, in good time, to introduce themselves. But had I so done, it is very possible that some, at least, of my readers, might have mistaken their real characters: for each of them wore a veil—one of confidence, and the other of bashfulness; neither of which is it easy to penetrate. Besides, in this philosophical age, when every man who sees an effect is looking for a cause, I thought I should be yielding much gratification to the thinking part of the community, by developing the secret springs of my own character. There is many a strange creature at large in society, of whose follies and infirmities it is almost impossible to give even a plausible account. We look at him as we do at the stones conjectured, by some naturalists, to fall from the moon. Now I was precisely one of those anomalous personages; and lest any philosopher, for want of a better hypothesis, should be betrayed into so rash a conjecture, as that

that

that I also came from the moon, I think it just and charitable to state the truth in the succeeding pages.

There is one observation which it is desirable to premise.—My readers may feel alarmed lest it should be my intention to detail to them many of the wise sayings of my aunt Winifred. Now, however worthy multitudes might think them of record, I certainly do not design to force them upon the rest of a thankless world. I shall therefore state only such as both gave the peculiar complexion to my own life, and are likely to influence the life of others. All her other maxims may be found in the works of Cervantes, or of Poor Richard, or in any other repertory for those sayings of which no one knows the author, but nine-tenths of the world acknowledge the indisputable authority and boundless value.

CHAP. III.

PREPARATION FOR SCHOOL.

I WAS born in the year 1755, in the manor-house of a sweet little country village, almost every cottage of which might be seen reflected in a small lake that spread itself over the valley beneath. I seem at this moment to see my aunt Winifred as she used to stand, as sad as one of the willows which wept over the water, and, pointing to the shadowy mansion beneath, to say, "Aye, child, all is not gold that glitters."

But though I perfectly remember the mansion in which I continued to live for a large part of my life, I can call to mind scarcely any of the occurrences of the first half of this time. I remember only, that at about twelve years old, I
used

used to hear the housemaid complain that I was “ of a very fretful temper ;” and that my aunt Winifred took no less pains to assure me that I “ was of a very delicate constitution.”—Of which last piece of information, one of the greatest mischiefs was, that it was considered as furnishing a complete apology for the fault hinted at in the first. I, moreover, found myself possessed of the name of Sancho ; the singularity of which title never struck me, till I found at least half a dozen pointers in the neighbourhood in the enjoyment of the same distinction. Upon inquiring into the origin of my name, however, I discovered that my aunt had vowed, early in life, that should she ever be possessed of a human being on whom she might be privileged to bestow a name, he should be enriched by at least one half of the title of the illustrious squire of Don Quixote,—he being, next to the oracle of Delphos, the greatest originator and promulgator of
those

those sententious sayings in which her heart delighted.

The first incident of my life of which I have a very distinct recollection, shall now be recorded. One morning in the middle of July, when I was about twelve years of age, I was suddenly summoned into the drawing-room, to hold a conference with my two aunts; or rather to look at the one, and to listen to the other. When I entered, the elder was seated, unemployed as to her hands, but with something of the expression upon her countenance usually given by painters to the philosopher who had made the long-desired discovery of the secret about Hiero's crown, and who exultingly ran about the city, crying, "I have discovered it, I have discovered it." Rachel was calmly knitting a pair of stockings for an old woman in the village. My aunt Winifred called me to her—took me by the hand—and would have kissed me, but that, alas! she perceived

ceived my face begrimed to the very eyes with half the contents of a pot of black-currant jelly, which she had, upon pain of her mortal displeasure, prohibited me from touching about an hour before. But being on the eve of promulgating one of those maxims, on which she deemed that my future welfare in life depended, she thought it, I suppose, impolitic to rouse any passions in my breast unfavourable to the lecture. Accordingly, with much sagacity, she left the currant jelly to soften the way for her lesson, and thus proceeded.

“ My dear Sancho, I, and your aunt Rachel” (for this was the order in which she always introduced the two names) “ have been determining to send you to school. You know my deep anxiety for your welfare, and therefore I need not insist upon the point. In order, then, to promote it, I have been consulting my memory for some single sentence in which I may treasure up all
the

the advice which it is most desirable for me to give you on the present occasion; nor have I consulted in vain: there is one rule, my dear boy, which will carry you with safety, honour, and splendour through life—it is this, ‘*Take care of Number One!*’ ”

Rachel, who, I suppose, comprehended the full meaning of the proverb, almost groaned.

“Sister Rachel,” said my aunt Winifred (whose ears on occasions such as these were prodigiously quick), “I know the expression is homely; but what of that? ‘Truth is truth, though never so homely.’ ‘Handsome is he that handsome does.’ ”

Aunt Rachel answered nothing; but I was far from being so silent on the occasion. I have not yet informed the reader (and it is a fact which I perceive writers in general have a prodigious objection, however well founded, to state to their readers) that I was always a per-

son

son of rather dull understanding. The reader may possibly, if charitable, think me a little improved by this time. I nevertheless beg to assure him, that of my dulness, at twelve years old, there never was the smallest question amongst those who knew me best. And of all things difficult to my apprehension, unfortunately for my aunt, and as she thought for myself, proverbs were the most difficult. Accordingly, I rarely failed, when my aunt first promulgated a sentiment of this kind, to her unbounded mortification, entirely to misapprehend it; and thus it was now. When my aunt, therefore, authoritative-ly and solemnly pronounced the words "Take care of Number One," it by no means occurred to me that "Number One" was the representative of so dignified a person as myself; but, thinking exclusively of a very splendid set of numbered counters which she had given me a few days before, I very simply asked, "And, aunt,

aunt, must not I take care of Number Two also?"

"Child," said my aunt, "you are little better than an idiot. Number One means your foolish self; and, therefore, if I must put into common English what is so briefly and forcibly expressed by the proverb, 'Take care of Number One,' means 'Take care of yourself alone.'"

"Oh," said I, "aunt, now I do understand you; and I am sure you will think me a very good boy, for I have just been 'taking care of Number One' in the very way you mean, by eating up all the currant jelly which you left upon the table."

My aunt Rachel a little archly smiled. But not so her sister. Her perplexity was extreme. For what dilemma could be more complete? Either she was wrong in ordering me not to eat the currant jelly; or the proverb was inaccurate. One of the two must be sacrificed—and nothing in the world was so dear

dear to her as the reputation and honour of both. The only expedient which occurred to her was the searching for some other proverb which might supply some sort of qualification for this. She would at the moment, I firmly believe, have given fifty pounds for a maxim so constructed as to say at once, "Take care of Number One, *and of your aunt.*" But no such proverb occurred to her. She called to mind indeed, for she was a tolerable Latin scholar, the proverb in that language, "*proximus sum egomet mihi,*" and that of the Italians, "*Fa bone à te e tuoi, e poi a gli altri se tu puoi.*" Then, for as far as proverbs went she was also familiar with the Greek, she recollected that Athenian saying, *Μισῶ σεβίστην ὅστις ἐκ αὐτῷ σεβής.* But unhappily one and all breathed the same spirit—one and all taught that self-love is the best principle, and self-indulgence the first duty of life. One and all of these maxims, uncontrouled

by any higher principle, would evidently lead a boy to disobey his aunt, and eat the currant jelly. What then could be done? Fortune sometimes assists those whom wisdom and literature refuse to help. And thus it happened now. For at this critical moment a carriage drove up to the front door, and the conference was suspended to wait upon the company. Before, however, they had time to enter the room, I heard my aunt Rachel very gently say, "I think that Roman Emperor was a very wise man, who wrote upon the walls of his palace in letters of gold, 'Do unto others as you would they should do unto you.'" I thought, moreover, that I heard her sister answer, "Pshaw!" And that I was not altogether mistaken in this supposition appears to be probable from this circumstance, that when I opened my box at school, ten days afterwards, I found, wrapt up in a triple paper, with a guinea to accompany it,

the

the identical maxim, unqualified and unmitigated, in all its own native simplicity and majesty, "Take care of Number One."

With such a recommendation, it could scarcely fail to be remembered and valued. Accordingly, thus armed and accoutred for the warfare of life, I entered upon my school career; and whoever wishes to know the feats which I there performed has only to read the next chapter.

CHAP. IV.

THE HISTORY OF "NUMBER ONE."

ON the twenty-fifth of July, with a whole guinea in my pocket, the contents of a pastry-cook's window in my trunk, and my aunt's precious maxim in my heart, I descended the steps of a post-chaise to enter for the first time upon all the distinctions and trials of a school-boy. The house was unusually high, covered with narrow windows, protected each, like those of a mad-house, by iron bars. The title, both of the mansion and of its owner, were inscribed, in Patagonian characters, upon its front. But, if it had been watched by Patagonians themselves, I should not, at that moment, have heeded them. Almost every person, knowing the evils of
his

his present situation, and uncertain about the future, expects to be benefited by a change of circumstances. Besides, wiser people than myself have been seduced by novelty. Moreover, there were two monstrous dragons, as yet barely introduced to my readers, which lay perpetually at the door of my aunt's house, namely, her Selfishness and Irritability; from which it was not in human nature, not to rejoice to escape. And still more, I had become sole proprietor, occupier, and administrator of the aforementioned accumulation of cakes and sweetmeats, on which, by a reasonable calculation, I might hope to live, if they themselves did not kill me, for at least a week. What more could the most ambitious school-boy covet?

The master having, by means of a slight trial, plumbed the depth of my ignorance, I was turned loose upon the school. Almost at the moment of my first entrance, a crowd of boys came

round me, not merely to ascertain who I was, but also what I had got ; it being the practice of that particular school—a practice, by the bye, much contemned in loftier seminaries—for every new comer to purchase his freedom by a liberal distribution of the gifts of his provident friends. Now it instantly occurred to me that I could not be dutiful too soon ; and that it would be terrible, indeed, to violate one of my aunt's maxims, before the tear she had shed on our separation was dry upon my cheek. And, therefore, I heroically resolved, in a moment, to shew the school that my first principle was to “take care of Number One.” Accordingly, I calmly took my sweets from their depository, and, as calmly, one by one, began to devour them.—It is said, that one of the French monarchs, when in a very infirm state of health, in order to deceive the English ambassador, ate an enormous dinner in public, of which he died in a few days ;
and

and, though a private person might not presume to scale the heights of regal ambition and magnanimity, certain it is, that, in support of my own dignity, and of my aunt's proverb, I devoured three times as much as I should have done in less arduous circumstances.

During this process, I was every instant expecting to receive some public acknowledgment of my superiority to vulgar prejudices and practices from the assembled school. But, what was my surprise, instead of this, to find a storm gathering around me—to see a general muster of the boys—to hear, as a sort of watch-word, the inelegant phrase of “greedy brute” vociferated from every quarter! And, at length, after the way of some bigger folks, the boys, resolving to seize as a right what they could not obtain as a gift, literally hustled me from my seat, rolled me on the ground, pounced like harpies upon the cakes, and hurried away into the play-ground,

to enjoy the fruits of their triumph and of my discomfiture. Nor was this the whole of my calamity. The attack had, unfortunately, not been made before I had swallowed enough for several people of my personal dimensions. Accordingly, the apothecary was sent for; and, between each of the successive phials, the contents of which he deemed it expedient, either for himself or for me, to force down my throat, I could not help sometimes moralizing a little upon this first result of my conformity to my aunt's maxim, and saying to myself, "It seems to me as if one of the best ways to 'take care of Number One' was to take care of all the rest of the numbers."

At last, however, the doctor left me, and I soon recovered. And, with my strength, my faith in my aunt's opinion returned; nor was I long, as my reader shall now learn, without reaping some additional fruits of it. Living under the
influence

influence of a principle which cherished such devoted zeal for my own interest and convenience, I was not likely soon to forget the injury which had been inflicted upon me. Accordingly, I most anxiously watched for an opportunity of finding alone a puny little urchin, who had been remarkably active in the assault upon me, and dealt him some such blows upon the precise spot of his dwarfish person which might be supposed to be particularly gratified by the theft from me, as sent him howling with agony into the school. But, what was my horror, to see the whole body of cannibals pour out in close squadron, and, without condescending to hold a moment's parley, began to pay me, in kind, and even with accumulated interest, for my attack upon one of their associates. And, as naturally no one of them could endure to be outdone by the rest in the demonstration of his loyalty and fidelity to so good a cause, so

c 5

thoroughly

thoroughly was I beaten, that the marvel is I am alive this day to record the history of my persecutions. At last, however, they left me, black and blue, in a corner of the play-ground : and here, once more, I had abundant leisure to philosophise ; and I could scarcely avoid questioning, pretty resolutely, at the moment, both the truth and the expediency of my aunt's maxim.

Still, however, a principle planted by her hand, and highly congenial to our sordid nature, was not soon to be rooted out. And, accordingly, I was doomed, besides enduring a thousand petty mortifications, besides incurring the hatred of the bulk of my school-fellows, to suffer a still heavier penalty of my love of self.

Self, as might be expected, is not a very accurate distinguisher between *mine* and *thine*. The distinctions of property vanish before an eye which sees only one individual in the whole world. Accordingly, in two or three different instances,

stances, I had, in compliance with the spirit of my aunt's maxim, laid my hands upon articles belonging to other boys; but had adroitly "taken such care of Number One," that no one had discovered the theft. At length, however, I felt an inordinate desire to become possessed of a knife, an article which my aunt, in tender love to my person, had always denied me, and, watching an opportunity, I found the desk of its owner open, and carried it off in triumph. But this triumph was short. The knife happened to be no less valuable to its real proprietor than to myself; and, being very popular in the school, he had interest to move and carry a resolution—that the trunk of every boy should be opened, and examined, in quest of it. What could be done? I first resisted the motion—then vehemently protested that the key was lost—then dexterously broke it in the lock. But all obstacles being overcome, the trunk was opened, and the

the knife found, carefully wrapped up, together with my aunt's maxim, in the identical triple envelope in which she conveyed it to school. Here was irresistible evidence of my guilt ; and the master being called in, and detecting at once the cause and consequence of my crime, out of regard for the rest of his school, dispatched me to my aunt with this laconic note :—

“ Madam,

“ You have sent your boy to school
 “ with a principle which has made him
 “ greedy, cruel, and dishonest. It is
 “ but just that you, who have given the
 “ disease, should endeavour to cure it ;
 “ and, therefore, I have sent him back
 “ to you.”

“ Your's, &c. &c.”

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

THE WAY TO TREAT AN HUMBLING
ADVERSARY.

IT would be very difficult, indeed, to paint the storm which raged in my aunt's mind (to say nothing of her countenance), upon her receipt of myself and the letter, of which I was the bearer. And as some thousands of writers, in prose and verse, have thought themselves privileged to employ, without any acknowledgment, the first *Æneid* for the description of all scenery of this kind, I shall take the more honest method of at once referring my readers to Virgil for a full and particular account of the whole transaction. Let them but conceive, which is by no means difficult, my aunt to be Juno, and her face to be
the

the sea, and the business is accomplished in a moment.

I had entered the room, not only without a blush, but with considerable self-complacency for my very dutiful conformity to my aunt's wishes.—No sooner was the letter read by the two sisters than, as they had not heard the slightest breathing of my adventures at school, they both with eager voice demanded what could have led to so rapid and extraordinary a catastrophe. I told my story with much simplicity—expressed no little horror and amazement at the villainy of school-boys—almost intimated a suspicion of the accuracy of my aunt's maxim—and courageously assured her, that if I had attempted to “take care of Number One” much longer, the boys would not have left a sound inch of “Number One” to be taken care of.

My aunt wrung her hands—but whether in dismay at my folly—at my sufferings—at the wickedness of the school

school boys, or of the master—or, finally, at the apparent fallibility of her infallible maxim, I am unable to say, as she said nothing herself. She then took a huge pinch of snuff, put the letter into the fire, and hid her face in her hands. Rachel was, as I have before said, a most tender creature; and, though even a somewhat stern moralist would have scarcely condemned her for feeling a momentary triumph in this practical refutation of so hateful a principle—and of a principle, moreover, to which she had discovered so strong a repugnance—she felt no triumph at all. In fact, all her sister's sorrows were her own; therefore, taking her gently by the hand, she said—"My dear sister, however much we may have differed about the value of this maxim, you, I am persuaded, no more foresaw or designed these consequences than I did. You did not mean Sancho to be greedy, cruel, or dishonest."

"My aunt," said I; "for here my
pride

pride took fire ; “ meant me to ‘ take care of Number One,’ and this is all I have done.”

“ My dear boy,” said the good-natured Rachel, “ you quite mistake the matter ; and as your aunt is too unwell just now to explain herself, I, in my poor way, will do it for her. She could mean no more by ‘ taking care of Number One,’ than that it was every person’s duty to take care of himself. But then the best way to take care of yourself, Sancho, is to please God, and to be just and kind to others.”

“ But aunt,” said I, “ there is nothing about pleasing God, and being good and kind to others, in the proverb.”

“ No, there is not,” she replied ; “ but still my sister meant all this, and a great deal more, as she would soon convince you, Sancho, if she were well. You understood the proverb to mean that you should indulge yourself in all that pleased you best at the moment ; your
aunt

aunt meant that you should do what was best for yourself upon the whole."

Now, not a word of this last distinction did I understand. But as I held my tongue—which is a rule I earnestly recommend to all persons in similar circumstances—my aunt Rachel did not find me out, and accordingly proceeded.

"My dear Sancho," she said, "no man ever became good or great who was very fond of himself; good and great men live for others. Look there, my boy;" and I turned my eyes to a fine copy of Ruben's Descent from the Cross, to which she pointed—"The Son of God," said she, "came down to live and to die for others."

This argument I did understand; and I can truly say that, through my long life, whenever I have wanted a cure for selfishness, I have found nothing so efficacious as following my aunt Rachel's advice. A hundred times at least, when
self

self has been getting the better of nobler considerations, her “ Look there, my boy !” has sounded in my ears. I have looked with my mind’s eye at the picture, and said, It is impossible to be a real follower of Christ, and to be selfish.

But, to return to our history. While I was looking at the picture, my aunt Winifred rose up. I thought that I saw her gratefully, though rather awkwardly, press her sister’s hand. I am sure that I saw her eyes full of tears. She left the room. Rachel immediately followed her, but not till she had said to me, “ Look, Sancho, to-night for a verse which I will mark in the little Bible I gave you, and you may venture to use that verse in future instead of the proverb.” I did look, and found my aunt’s initials marked opposite the words, “ Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;” and I think it right to say, that if I had literally complied with this command, either at that time,

time, or for many years of my life, there are very few people in the world who would have loved their neighbour better. But, of this also, the reader may judge for himself in the following pages.

CHAP. VI.

ANOTHER HEAD OF THE HYDRA.

HE knows little of human nature who fancies that the follies and vices of the world, in general, are, as it were, to be brought down by a single shot. And he knows equally little of the character of my aunt Winifred who imagines her to be an exception to this general rule, and conceives her likely to be cured of her error by the single incident recorded in the last chapter. It is often the property of those who hold very foolish opinions, to be attached to them just in proportion to their folly—as idolaters love their idols the better, the more deformed they are. I do not say that my aunt entertained quite the same profound respect for the particular proverb which
had

had so much dishonoured the family ; but she attached just the same value to all other proverbs. Accordingly, having taken time to collect herself, to let the incidents at school in a measure escape from my memory, and to search into the collected principles of ages, for some other equally great, but safer, principle of action, she at length announced to me her intention of sending me to another school ; and having sent for me alone, to avoid the scrutiny of her sister, she thus addressed me :—

“ I will own, my dear Sancho, that when I sent you to school with only one single proverb for a guide and protector, I trusted somewhat too much to its solitary efficacy. As every man has two arms, and two legs, and two eyes, and two ears, it is no disparagement of proverbs to admit, that two are necessary to guide you aright in the thorny path of life. I have, therefore, deeply investigated the influence of the first maxim I
gave

gave you, upon your conduct at school ; and I find that you ate, fought, and stole, in an exceptionable manner, not because you gave heed to one proverb, but because you did not give heed to two. I have had, I will own, some difficulty in discovering what maxim might be best associated with the first ; but, at length, my good genius has suggested one, and I now communicate it to you—it is this, “ Do at Rome as they do at Rome.”

Now, as the master of the school had not allowed me by any means to waste even the few weeks I spent there, and as my reading had been confined, agreeably to the practice of the day, almost entirely to the classics, I had managed, in that short time, to obtain a pretty intimate acquaintance with not a few of the worst characters and practices of ancient Rome. I had heard, for instance, with profound admiration, of the “ godlike Cato” stabbing himself—and of the “ immortal Brutus” stabbing his friend—of the
“divine

“divine Julius” abandoning himself to every possible vice—of the “deified Nero” setting fire to Rome, fiddling while it burned, and, with the most majestic contempt of all those rules of truth so very inconvenient to the lower orders of society, imputing the guilt of the conflagration to the Christians. My aunt, therefore, had no sooner pronounced the proverb, than a confused prospect of daggers, swords, crowns, fiddles, fires, burst upon my delighted eyes. In a moment I bethought myself how delightful it would be on the next fifth of November, disdaining the ancient tardy and niggardly method of celebrating on that day our zeal for Protestantism, and abomination of Popery, by collecting a few stray sticks, and lighting up a paltry bonfire—at once, like Nero, to thrust a burning brand into my aunt’s largest hay-stack, and, with Robin the gardener, no mean fiddler, to light up a fire worthy of Rome itself—and then to charge the
conflagration

conflagration upon some boys in the village. But this very idea, I suppose, by bringing the subject near home, convinced me that I must have mistaken my aunt's meaning. She, who was so invariably attentive to her own interest, could scarcely have intended me to burn her hay-ricks. Therefore, that I might fall into no error, I determined to ask, whether she meant that I was "to do as they did in *ancient* Rome."

"No, child," said my aunt.

"What then," said I, "as they do in *modern* Rome?"

"Worse and worse," said my aunt. "When will you understand, boy, the only species of language that is worth understanding? To "do at Rome as they do at Rome," is a sage maxim of antiquity, which teaches us, that "in whatever spot of the globe we may chance to be, it is our duty kindly to accommodate ourselves to the prevailing customs."

"Indeed!"

“ Indeed !” said I, “ aunt,” opening wide my mouth, and both eyes, besides manifesting every other conceivable sign of astonishment.

“ Indeed !” replied my aunt, “ and why not ? If you cannot otherwise understand what seems to be so obvious,—apply this principle to the very circumstances in which you have lately been placed, and you will at once see the important effect of it. Had you, for instance, acted upon it at school ; forasmuch as it was not the custom of the school to eat cakes without also distributing them—to pommel poor, little, puny, helpless boys in a corner—to make free with the property of others, you would both have escaped a beating, and have been suffered, perhaps, even at this moment, to remain in the school.”

Now, although my aunt was, as I conceive, singularly injudicious in urging the last of these motives in favour of her argument, seeing I hated the school

with all my heart, yet the promise of full immunity in future from all corporal chastisement had such charms for me, that I at once yielded myself a convert to my aunt and to her new proverb.

Let it not, however, be thought that my sage counsellor admitted my profession to be genuine upon too slight a trial. Such suspicion had she of the treachery of my memory and understanding, that she thought it right to ascertain whether I actually knew the words of the proverb; and her dismay may be conceived, when she caught me in the very fact of slipping in the monosyllable “not,” after the first “do;” so that I was within a hair of going to school with the following maxim in my mouth, “Do *not* at Rome as they do at Rome;”—a maxim unknown, I humbly conceive, to either “Porch” or “Academy,” and so very like the scriptural maxim of “not following a multitude to do evil,” as not very easily to insinuate
itself

itself amidst the fundamentals of large communities. Indeed, the bias I had to insert this "*not*," was quite whimsical. My aunt's patience was, in fact, nearly exhausted. At length, however, by dint of daily repetition, and a few well-applied bribes, I was considered as sufficiently perfect in my lesson, and consequently fit for school.

I trust my reader has kept in mind that my aunt Rachel had not been considered as worthy of initiation into these mysteries. Accordingly, when the morning arrived for my departure to a new school, it is difficult to say which of the two sisters most rejoiced at the circumstance. Winifred considered me to be as safe under the guardianship of this new principle, as if tied to her own apron-string: Rachel conceived me to be safer any where than at home. The issue of the last experiment taught her to hope that some practical antidote would be furnished at school, for what-

ever other mischievous principle I might have the misfortune to carry along with me. But herein, I presume to think, her disposition to hope the best from every thing betrayed her into a very capital error. Though school-boys, like all other communities, are likely to punish selfishness for their own sake ; there are certain other vices so much less troublesome as to be infinitely more popular. But I shall not anticipate what it is the province of the historian to record in the subsequent chapter.

CHAP. VII.

THE HISTORY OF A CONFORMIST.

THE histories of Non-conformists have often employed the pens of the annalist and biographer. In pity, therefore, to an age perpetually demanding a change, it is my intention to present them with the perfectly novel history, of which the motto at the head of this chapter is an appropriate title.

Having bid adieu to my two aunts, I soon found myself in a large circle of new school-fellows. During my ride, I had seriously reflected on the faults in my conduct in the first school, and resolved strenuously to avoid them. "If my aunt," said I to myself, "had felt, as I have done, the personal results of 'taking care of Number One,' she would

not, I am persuaded, have continued to urge the proverb inculcating that duty as strongly as she does. At all events, with such experience of the consequences which attend it, I cannot be expected to extend to it the same unbounded reverence ; and, accordingly, I utterly forswear the use of it."

Now, it is obvious that nothing could be more favourable to my adherence to her second proverb, than this repugnance to the first. As I hated the first for its selfishness, so I valued the other for its apparent good-nature.—“ ‘ Do as others do !’ Why,” said I to myself, “ instead of hisses, and groans, and blows, I shall be the most popular boy in the school.” Under the influence of this spirit of accommodation, I entered the school.

For a short period, I was satisfied to act upon my new principle in a general manner, merely putting myself into the stream of the school, and contentedly fall-
ing

ing down its broad and impetuous current. During this time, I was frequently delighted to hear the title of "good-natured fellow" very liberally bestowed upon me; and the only inconvenience I felt from my spirit of conformity, was the being made the general fag of the school—being always thrust from the fire when any other person wanted a place—and suffering the penalty of all the faults committed by the boys, though myself, perhaps, wholly unconcerned in the commission of them. This penalty, however, became heavier every day; and, besides, I began to say to myself, "This is concession, not imitation—this is doing what others please, not what others do—this will never satisfy my aunt." Accordingly, I resolved to act more strictly in the spirit of the proverb.

The first endeavour, accordingly, was, to find out a model for my daily life. And it was natural enough to begin with those easiest of imitation. There-

fore, as doing nothing was far easier than doing much, and doing wrong far easier than doing right, I as naturally made my selection from some of the idlest and worst boys in the school. With these I strictly allied myself; or, to speak more correctly, I became a sort of “umbra,” or shadow, to them; and after a short time, it must be admitted, that my imitation was very successful, and that I did both as little and as wrong as most of them. “Now,” said I to myself, “I ‘do at Rome as they do at Rome.’”

Many were the not altogether indisputable practices which, in the capacity of a conformist, I was obliged to adopt. If an exercise, for instance, was given out; sometimes a most convenient illness seized us at the very moment, and the medicines sent by the doctor were dexterously thrown out of the window: sometimes an old exercise was vamped up to suit the present exigency: sometimes a little boy was thrashed into the execution

execution of the task we were too idle to perform. But these, our literary offences, were by no means the greatest. There was, in fact, scarcely any thing right which we allowed ourselves to do; and scarcely any thing wrong which we judged it expedient to leave undone. This state of things was not, however, likely to last long. Our devices, many of which were not a little ingenious, deceived the master for a time; and we escaped, for that period, with the hearty contempt of all the boys of better and higher feeling, of which there were not a few in the school; but at last, by the treachery of one of our body, a full developement was made of all our delinquencies.

I will not stop to describe the catastrophe which followed—the expulsion of the worst offenders; the punishing of others; the eloquent lecture which the master delivered from that line of Horace, “*Imitatores sercum pecus*,” which he

chose to interpret, "Imitators, a drove of slaves;" and the still more forcible lesson which he founded upon the very text of Scripture formerly quoted, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." I must say, I never felt such respect for the master before. I was, happily, too young to be considered and dealt with as one of the ringleaders; and, consequently, remained at school, to ruminate on past events and to resolve for the future.

Now, it may be thought, by some of my most precipitate readers, that I at once arrived at the conclusion that the principle of imitation was false, and that I as rapidly abjured and abandoned it. But he who so reasons has, I am disposed to think, more good-nature than acquaintance with me or with human nature. It is very easy—as the poet, speaking of a somewhat similar descent, has long since said—to "descend;" but to "ascend again" is just as difficult. And,
among

among the various contrivances adopted by those who pretend to be labouring up the ascent, is that of taking, instead of the direct, straight path, any path, however circuitous or remote, which may be conceived to lead to the same point. It was thus in my case. I determined, not at once to abandon all imitation, not to study my duty in the Bible and honestly endeavour to discharge it, but to imitate only those who were better than myself. And, as the reader, perhaps, may be disposed to esteem this a very wise resolution, I will fully and candidly reveal to him the consequences of it.

In the first place, then, I chose a single boy as a model ; but as he, though possessed of many good qualities, had also one or two bad ones, I naturally took the bad with the good ; and falling, as it was likely, a good deal below my model, I soon became possessed, together with a part of his excellencies, of
every

every one of his blemishes and defects, upon an enlarged scale.

I next tried the plan of choosing more than one model; but the same process took place, and by degrees I found myself possessed in full of all their faults. If any one had compared me with the persons whom I imitated, I wore something of the air of a servant dressed out in his master's worst clothes.

But even this was a small part of the evil: I found that every act of imitation tended to degrade the mind. I became a coward; and, when my safety required it, a liar. Under these circumstances, I was not likely to hold a very high place in the estimation of the boys. I was, in fact, a sort of foot-ball to the whole community. Innumerable were the tricks they played upon me. My blood even now runs cold when I call to mind one of them.—Boys are remarkably fond, without

without precisely going through the rites of baptism, of bestowing a new name, vulgarly called a nick-name, upon all the rest of the world. But, as they had so often presumed upon my conformity as to know that I would patiently suffer every possible indignity, they determined, in my particular case, when they bestowed this new name, not to dispense with any part of the ceremony; but, on the contrary, to administer it after the manner of the ancient oriental churches. Accordingly, I was conducted to the river; and having received, from the concurrent voices of about a hundred attendants, the very honourable appellation of "Sneak," I was just about to be plunged, in a December morning, into the water, for the necessary ablution, when, happily, one of the ushers came to my rescue.

I need scarcely add, that, under circumstances such as these, my situation was daily becoming more irksome and intolerable.

intolerable. Dejected and ashamed, with no friends but one or two to whom my suppleness was convenient, I dragged on a miserable existence. And such an existence I should probably have continued to drag on—and that without even the smallest interruption—till this very moment, if I had not unexpectedly one morning received the following letter from my aunt Rachel.

But, before I give the letter, let me briefly state the history of it.—It seems that her sister had for some time profoundly kept the secret of my discipline and preparation for school; but, hearing nothing to the contrary, and conjecturing, according to the well-known and much approved maxim of the world, that “no news is good news,” my aunt Winifred could no longer contain her joy, and exultingly instructed her sister by what principle she had qualified me for my new situation. Rachel said nothing, but shook her head, much in the
same

same way in which Cassandra, when predicting the fall of Troy, may be supposed to have shaken hers. And she shook it with precisely the same success. Her sister smiled at her incredible simplicity; and, in that exuberance of good-humour which success often inspires even in very cross people, she said gaily, "Well, sister, we shall see."

But, if my aunt Rachel was not so profuse as to waste her arguments where they were not likely to do any good, she was too conscientious not to try them where there was at least some hope of success; and, accordingly, that very night, she sat up till twelve o'clock penning the letter to which I have adverted, and a small part of which, out of my great love to the public, I shall now copy for their benefit. I extract only a small part of it, because the rest of the foolscap sheet was occupied with details of family occurrences, and, especially

cially, with half a dozen incidents calculated to increase my love for my aunt Winifred—a point which, I must say, my dear aunt Rachel never neglected to labour. After this exercise of her charity and tenderness, the letter thus proceeded :

“ I was reading, my dear boy, a few days since, a striking story told by a traveller who had visited the celebrated Falls of Niagara. As he was standing amidst the rocks at the head of this stupendous fall, and watching wave after wave, as it reached the point where it was precipitated some hundreds of feet into the gulf beneath, he suddenly saw a canoe with a single Indian approaching the awful brink. The poor wretch saw his danger ; struggled against the stream for a few moments ; and then, at the very instant when he seemed to be mastering his perils, instead of continuing the struggle, with a sort of wild despair

spair calmly folded his arms upon his bosom, left his canoe to drive with the torrent, was hurried over the edge, and shivered to a thousand pieces in the rocky gulf below.—The story is awful. But I could not help saying to myself, when I had read it, Things as awful take place in the world every day. Life, my dear boy, with its customs, habits, and amusements, is also a hurried and tempestuous stream. The young set sail upon it in their little barks; struggle, perhaps, for a moment, with the torrent; then, when every eye is bent upon them and confident of their success, fold their arms on their bosoms, drive with the stream, reach the fatal brink, and sink to rise no more.—Beware, my dear Sancho, of getting into the stream; beware of imitation; beware of ‘doing as others do.’ The only safe rules of conduct are to be found in the Bible: the only safe model of conduct is He who was ‘without spot and without

out

out blemish.' Love, my boy, but do not imitate

"Your affectionate aunt,

"RACHEL ———."

Now it so happened, that, when I received this letter, I was lying, very ill at ease indeed, under the shade of an oak near the play-ground. I went immediately and fetched a little Bible which my aunt had given me; read several chapters in the history of the life and death of Christ; and was delighted to find something in it so very different from those whom I had hitherto been imitating. Then I prayed to God—for the first time in my life, I believe, with sincerity—to make me good, to make me independent, to make me a little like my aunt Rachel, and altogether like Him whom she was continually striving and praying to resemble.

But as I did not persist in petitions such as these, this feeling soon decayed.

I passed

I passed a few years of misery and insignificance in the school, and was then removed to prepare for college.—But my very many readers from the two universities will be justly offended, if I do not put my university-history into a distinct chapter; and my profound reverence for those learned bodies will not suffer me willingly to offer them any offence.

Before, however, I close this chapter, I have a few observations to offer, in extenuation of those faults which I have, in this chapter, so freely imputed to myself.—It is not impossible that some of the least charitable part of the world, in reading the last pages of this history, may have allowed themselves in a feeling in some degree allied to contempt, for the very unfortunate author of them. Now it may, perhaps, tend to mitigate this feeling, if they will call to mind the not improbable fact, that they themselves perhaps belong no less to the “servum pecus” of imitators than myself.

self. Independence, I am disposed to think, is a plant of very rare growth indeed. Even that which bears the name, is often little better than mere imitation. The apparent substance is no more than a shadow. In illustration whereof I beg to tell the following story.

On the broad breast of a mountain, in a remote part of Hungary, a traveller was confounded to behold an apparition of a most terrific aspect. It was at least four hundred feet high; had all the features of a man; carried in its hand a massy club, which "ever and anon," it swung around, to the infinite horror of the spectator. Far from bearing any resemblance to those quiescent genii sometimes said to be imprisoned in a chest, or in the Red Sea, by the hand of necromancy, it exhibited the most astonishing activity. The traveller, for instance, no sooner moved a step to the right or left, but he saw his tremendous visitor, as it were in resentment of the movement,

movement, rush with hurried step across the mountain. If the traveller approached the hill, the giant instantly descended it, as though to meet him at its foot. If, on the contrary, he retired from the hill, he had the consolation of seeing the giant immediately re-ascend it.--Many saw the phantom, and all concurred in regarding it as the most tremendous spectre that had ever been suffered to discover itself to the pigmy inhabitants of the world. None for a moment questioned its total independence of every thing below. At last a celebrated philosopher visited the mountain. After partaking, for a time, of the astonishment of the other spectators, he set himself to decipher the mystery, and actually discovered that the spectre was the mere image of himself, reflected by the rising sun upon the face of the mountain. How did all reverence for the phantom subside! How did the credulous spectators blush to discover that all its move-

ments

ments were merely imitative!—that the awful circles of his club were the reflected movements of a walking-stick; and the solemn nodding of his helmet, the obscure image of a hat and wig put in motion by the wind!—And now to apply my story. I venture, then, to assure my readers, that very much of what they are pleased to call independence or originality in themselves or others, is precisely akin to this shadowy visitor—that it is a mere phantom—a “dream of a dream, and shadow of a shade;”—that man is but the mere creature of imitation—that B is too often the mere shadow of A, and C of B, and Z of some or all of the personages who precede or surround him;—and that, after all, nothing is more rare than a person who honestly and independently studies the word of God, to learn his duties as a man and as a Christian; and then proceeds as honestly and independently, to discharge those duties.

If

If any reader of this volume is able, as I sincerely hope he may, securely, though humbly, to lay his hand upon his heart, and say that he is such a man ; —all that I will say, in return, is, “ Let me have that man for my bosom friend.”

And now for the promised chapter, or, at least, for the preface to it.

CHAP. VIII.

TRAINING FOR COLLEGE.

AS my aunt's last experiment did not issue in any violent catastrophe--or, in other words, as I was neither beaten nor expelled for my rigid adherence to her maxim—she saw nothing in the result of her project which was calculated to undeceive her as to its intrinsic value. Nor was I myself disposed to undeceive her. My long habits of conformity and concession made it much more easy and natural for me to attend to her, than to require her to attend to truth and right reason. Therefore, in spite of what experience might have taught me, I adhered to proverbs, and to every species of oracular sentence, with almost as much devotion as my aunt herself. If she might be
 esteemed

esteemed a knight-errant in the cause, I might without presumption pretend to the dignity of squire; and was scarcely, I venture to say, less true to my character than my illustrious namesake and predecessor. So that when the time for going to college approached, I cordially concurred with her in thinking that nothing could be more essential to my right conduct there, than the judicious selection of half a dozen of these sage maxims—by means of which I, perhaps somewhat ambitiously, hoped to exhibit, in the short space of a three years' residence, the collected wisdom of many centuries.

My aunt Rachel, indeed, would, if an opportunity had been given her, have made me familiar with a very different kind of wisdom. But then her sister always followed so closely and watchfully upon her heels; she talked with so much more of an oracular tone; and, moreover, perpetually supplied me with such

E salutary

salutary cautions against the fanaticism, &c. of her sister, that the mild, gentle creature, had rarely the least influence with me,—except, indeed, when my aunt Winifred was cross. At those moments, it must be confessed, that I used always to hide my cares in her bosom. But, as few persons would be more attractive (a case by no means uncommon with the whole family of scolds, and, in itself, a sufficient demonstration how much better they might be if they would,) than my aunt Winifred when she had a great point to carry, I was not obliged very often, at this period of my history, thus to take refuge in the tenderness of Rachel. And besides, her requisitions were too high for the then forlorn state of my mind. She required me to be “*sans peur*,” as well as “*sans reproche*,” which, however possible to a good or a brave man, is quite impossible to a man determined to “do at Rome as they do at Rome.”

But

But to return.—The time was now fixed for my departure. My aunt, by dint of an extra cup of agrimony, a few additional turns on the broad sunny gravel walk, and much mental communion with the sages of antiquity, at length managed to construct the following brief table of maxims which I shall present to my reader in the precise form in which she delivered it to me.

“MORAL CODE,

“FOR

“MY NEPHEW SANCHE AT COLLEGE,

“COLLECTED

“FROM THE STORES OF ANCIENT AND MO-

“DERN WISDOM,

“BY WINIFRED -----.

“*On Religion.*

- “ 1. ‘ Many men many minds.’
- “ 2. ‘ Seeing is believing.’
- “ 3. ‘ Never too late to repent.’
- “ 4. ‘ The nearer the church the farther from God.’

“ On Character.

“ 1. ‘ Nullum numen abest si sit prudentia;’ or, as my aunt translated it, ‘ Where prudence is, no divinity is absent.’

“ 2. ‘ An honest man’s the noblest work of God.’

“ On the Choice of Friends.

“ 1. ‘ A warm enemy makes a warm friend.’

“ 2. ‘ He is nobody’s enemy but his own.’ ”

My aunt, meaning this code to descend as a sort of heir-loom to our remotest descendants, was at the pains of having it engrossed in double jet ink, upon the cherished skin of a family donkey which had recently died, by the parish school-master; and, having moreover set the family name and seal to it, she consigned it with much solemnity to my keeping.

But let it not be thought that this consignment

signment was made without the addition of that in which my aunt conceived at least one half of the value of the gift to consist. With this code she gave her own comments upon it. And that such an important document should not be trusted in successive ages to the treacherous medicum of tradition, I shall now insert it in this imperishable volume—presenting to the world, at once, my aunt's lecture, and my occasional observations and interruptions as she recited its several parts.

“ My dear Sancho,” she said, “ I have, chiefly I will own out of compliment to general opinion, begun with the subject of *religion*. You know, that I have never maintained any very precise or rigid opinions upon that subject ; and the maxims I shall give you are meant rather to restrain you from excess on this subject, than to rouse you to any particular warmth of feeling.”

“ Then, my dear aunt,” said I, “ pray

be kind enough at once to get rid of this superfluous part of the code. I do assure you, that I am in no danger upon this point. Far from having any tendency to excess in religion, I scarcely remember ever to have had a religious feeling in the whole course of my life."

"My boy," she answered, "when will you learn prudence? You may, as yet, have had no such feelings; but, in this highly enthusiastic age, it is by no means improbable that you may be thus tempted; and, therefore, take these maxims as a sort of dead weight to hang round the neck of rising fanaticism. Their value for this purpose is incalculable. Should you be leaning, for instance, to any particular modification of religion—what better corrective than the truth 'many men many minds?' Should you, again, be tempted to receive any of the popular doctrines, most mischievously countenanced by the Church of England, about 'faith'—what more powerful

powerful antidote than the maxim ‘seeing is believing?’ If in danger of religious melancholy—you may at once defer the consideration of all topics, without limit, on the authority of the third important saying, that ‘it is *never* too late to repent.’ And, if seduced into any very puritanical strictness about attending the church, or embracing its bigoted creeds—you may at once escape, by remembering, that ‘the nearer the church, the farther from God.’

I confess, that I was not a little startled at the boldness of some of my aunt’s positions. I, moreover, remembered that a part of the pique expressed in them, against the Bible and the Church, might be referred to two causes ;—first, to my aunt Rachel’s so cordially reverencing the Bible; and, secondly, to the clergyman of the village, as honest a creature as ever lived, being in the vexatious habit of weekly dealing out such plain, pointed, pithy sermons, that my aunt Wi-

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nifred,

nifred, every Sunday evening, warmly protested "every one of them must be preached at her." But, however, all the sentiments stated above were conveyed in maxims of such acknowledged celebrity, that it was impossible for a moment to dispute them. She, accordingly, thus proceeded in her very salutary lecture.

"Sancho," she said, "I have passed on from religion to *general character*; and have given you, in this department, two maxims which mean much the same thing. But could I have found a volume of maxims, to teach you the paramount value of 'prudence,' I would gladly have introduced them. 'Prudence,' my boy, is the religion of this world. And I am free to say, that having this, I do not see the need of very much besides."

Now, here again I was not, in the smallest degree, disposed to question my aunt's accuracy. If, indeed, she had in
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this place substituted for the word "prudence" what she really meant by it, namely, "worldly policy," I might, perhaps, have hesitated for a moment. But who could question whether prudence, properly so called, was a good thing? And, admitting this, of all people in the world, my aunt was, perhaps, best entitled to be heard as a lecturer, a final authority, a "*suprema lex*," upon this particular subject. She herself was that quality embodied. I firmly believe that, as far as respected her own interest, so inexorably true was she to these darling maxims that she scarcely ever was guilty of an act of imprudence in the whole course of her somewhat protracted life. Again she resumed her discourse.—

"The two last maxims," she said, "respect *the choice of friends*; and they need no comment. Strong alliances are best wrought out of strong passions; just as strong chains must be forged in a hot
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fire.

fire. And he who is 'no one's enemy but his own,' must be best calculated to become a friend to every other person."

My aunt said no more, but took (which in her case was always both a cause and a consequence of joy) an enormous pinch of snuff at either nostril, gave me her hand with an indescribable look of self-complacency, and, majestically quitting the room, left me, I presume, to meditate upon the incalculable value of such a counsellor, and of such counsels. But, as she gave me no express injunctions as to the nature of my immediate employment, instead of proceeding to meditate, I ventured to follow my own inclinations, and, accordingly, hurried away to break in a pointer-puppy for next September. In which occupation, however, I think it but just to acknowledge, that I found several of my aunt's maxims of incredible advantage; and, in the fulness of my satisfaction

tion at the moment, I could not help exclaiming, more than once, " If so good for pointers, how very good must they be for men !"

I have forgotten to say, that for the three months which preceded my removal to college, my aunt Rachel had been confined to her room with an attack of rheumatism. This circumstance was wonderfully convenient for her sister's plans. For, apprehending many evil consequences from our coming in contact, she persisted, in spite of doctor, nurse, and patient, in calling the rheumatism a species of fever—and, of course, out of tender regard to my very delicate constitution, in prohibiting my approach to the scene of a contagious disorder. Accordingly, I left home for the university, without seeing my aunt Rachel. Often has she since told me what a pang this cost her. But her sufferings little occupied me at the moment. My habit, at that period of my life,

thanks

thanks to aunt Winifred's maxims, was to think of no one's pangs or pleasures but my own.

Early in October, I set off for college, where those, who have no such repugnance to an university life as to prevent their following me, will find me in the next chapter.

CHAP. IX.

A MORNING IN COLLEGE.

ON as bright a morning as ever shone upon the cloistered windows of an university quadrangle, I opened my eyes in a cot of six feet by two and a half, where I had slept most profoundly for eight hours. I naturally lay in bed a short time, to meditate upon my new circumstances. I was possessed of rooms, of a well-replenished purse, and of personal independence, for the first time in my life. Nor was this all. It has been said, that no human figure can, by the utmost exertions of art, be so constructed as to stand without the addition of some sort of fulcrum or prop. How much less, then, can the moral man be expected to stand erect, amidst the storms
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of the world, without certain fixed rules or principles of action. But, then, such was my singular good fortune, that I was put in possession also of these. In my trunk lay the “code” of my aunt—nothing less than the condensed wisdom, not only of her life, but of many lives not less illustrious; and, according to the strict letter and spirit of which, I proposed to begin, to continue, and to end my university career. Now, all these circumstances presented fruitful topics for meditation. But, however attractive, they had not power long to detain me from rising to put my principles and privileges to the proof. I accordingly dressed, seated myself at my breakfast table, and entered, with much composure and self-gratulation, upon the functions of a college life. And I must say, that the *debut* was remarkably favourable to all my aunt’s schemes. In the general devotion of all around to my particular convenience, appetites, and wishes, expressed

pressed or unexpressed, I found much to encourage me in that intense devotion to self which it was the object of her maxims so zealously to inculcate. Perhaps, indeed, there is no situation in life in which a man is more completely at once the centre and circumference of his own sphere of being than in college.—I would beseech certain comely, sleek, rosy, unruffled persons in jet black, still to be found meandering about the courts or walks of our universities, to remember this simple truth.

After a little more musing, I determined precisely to reverse the order of my aunt's maxims, and to begin by acting upon those which regulated the "choice of friends."—Now, Diogenes is said to have wandered about with a lantern, hunting for an honest man. I did not adopt the same expedient in my search for a friend. On the contrary,

trary, I entered the common hall at the sound of a bell at two o'clock, in the full confidence, that, not merely a dinner, but a friend would be there provided for me. Nor were my hopes disappointed. At one table sat the juniors of the college, and at another, placed transversely, the seniors. I happened to be seated near the last-mentioned body, and soon discovered, if my aunt's theory on the strong passions was accurate, abundant ingredients, even in this division of the hall, for all the loftiest desires and purposes of friendship. The dinner, the weather, the state of the world, and especially of that most important part of it—the college; the dangers of the church, the prevalence of sectarianism, the new manufactory for fansticks; one and each of these topics sufficed to call out some of those peculiar and somewhat intense order of expressions in which the strong passions appear

appear commonly to delight: "Here," said I, "if my aunt's principle be true, is at once a community of friends. Was ever person so fortunate?"

But it was natural for me to search for my associates among those of my own age. And accordingly I descended from these higher regions to the *minores gentes* of the lower table. And I beg to certify, that, whether imitative or indigenous, the strong passions prevailed sufficiently in every quarter of our table to exclude all necessity of looking higher for friends.

But here I must pause for a moment, both to explain myself and to vindicate the universities of these favoured realms. If any one expects to find in me a rude assailant of these learned bodies, or indeed any thing but their friend and champion, he is egregiously mistaken. I knew them both some half century since—I love them both—and although I do conceive them even now susceptible

tible of much improvement, especially as to the religious and professional education of their youth, I still consider them as the best guarantees, under Providence, for the learning, the religion, and the welfare of the country. Far, very far, be it from me, therefore to join hands with those rude innovators who would, in despair of her resuscitation by a gentler process, hew the Alma-mater to pieces, cast her into the fiery kettle of reform, and pronounce over her certain incantations in a broad Scotch dialect of much imagined efficacy in such cases. All intemperate assaults upon our colleges and halls are to be met by a confident appeal to the thousands of good and great men who have issued, and are perpetually issuing, from their gates. All such unmeasured hostility will merely provoke the hallowed indignation of multitudes, who have there first stooped to drink the cool stream of science—there first wandered in the groves of philosophy—

sophy—there, especially, first learned to worship the God of their fathers; first learned their guilt, and bowed before the cross of a crucified Saviour; first learned their weakness, and cast themselves upon the strength and goodness of God. With the enemies, then, concealed or avowed, of these illustrious bodies, I desire to have neither part nor lot. But if there be any loving these groves of learning and wisdom like myself, who are disposed gently and reverently to address the sages who watch over them, and to call upon them to add to “their sound learning,” somewhat more of “religious education,” I join hand and heart with these friendly monitors. I supplicate our instructors to hear and obey these salutary monitions; and I call upon God, wherever there is a single spot as yet lighted only by the dim and perishable star of human science, to shed upon it the holier lustre of purity and devotion. Having, in the
honesty

honesty of my heart, said thus much, I return to my history.

Finding the strong passions so predominant in all quarters of the college, as to promise a large harvest of "warm friends," I thought it desirable to search for some person who should combine, with this qualification for friendship, the second property named by my aunt—that of "being no one's enemy but his own." Accordingly I began my inquiries with much diligence and circumspection. My aunt abhorred precipitancy, and so did I. I determined, therefore, to make no selection till I had collected the most overwhelming evidence upon the point. At length, however, hearing almost the whole college concur in the praise of one individual, in calling him a fine fellow—a spirited fellow—a real good fellow—a good-hearted fellow—the best fellow in the world—and, finally, in declaring him to be "nobody's enemy but his own," I
ventured

ventured to decide, and sought by every possible overture to make this individual my friend. And as he was a social, easy sort of person, and, moreover, a prodigious lover of good eating and drinking, I found less difficulty than I had anticipated in accomplishing so momentous an object. Before a few weeks had elapsed we were sworn intimates, and spent almost the whole of our time together. And as some of my readers may have never had an opportunity of very closely examining the life of a person who is reputed to be "nobody's enemy but his own," I shall very liberally give them, without the smallest deduction, the full benefit of my own experience.

In the first place, I soon perceived that he scarcely ever opened a book. Now, in this, he was plainly enough his own enemy. But whether, in so doing, he was not also the enemy of some parent or guardian, who had sent him to the university for the very purpose of study;

study ; I could not at that moment decide, as I knew nothing of his peculiar circumstances. I will own, however, that I could not help, even then, suspecting—in my better moments at least—that, if no enemy to God or man, he was evidently no friend to either, or he would not have consumed talents and time to no purpose, which might have been employed to the honour of God, and to the benefit of his fellow-creatures.

In the next place, I soon discovered him, especially when elated by wine, to be enthusiastically given to every species of riot and disturbance. What is classically termed a “row” was his glory. In this case also, when I heard the casements of a pauper shiver under his fist, or saw the blood of a watchman trickle down his cheeks, I certainly found no small difficulty in conceiving him to be “nobody’s enemy but his own.”

Moreover, I was not long in ascertaining, that he paid no tradesman’s bill
which

which he found it possible to elude. And it must be confessed, that neither the tradesmen thus defrauded (especially when they dated their letters from the town gaol) or their wives and children, ever had the generosity to concur in the declaration that he was "nobody's enemy but his own."

Finally, I perceived that his various exploits were not accomplished without a most enormous expenditure. And what was my horror to learn, after a short time, that this man of "strong passions"—this "good hearted fellow"—this "best fellow in the world"—this "enemy to none but himself"—was, in fact, the only son of a widow living in a garret, who had economised by abstinence, by days and nights of patient toil, by racking and screwing her aged sinews, the sum of money which he in a few months had squandered at college. She was the destitute widow of a clergyman—shame to the country there should be any such! —and

—and the wish of her heart had been to hear her son proclaim to the world the principles by which her husband had lived well, and died triumphantly. Such was her wish—such her endeavour to realize it—and such the fruits which this “real good fellow” paid back into the bosom of his aged mother. On a visit to London, I accidentally discovered his house; surprised him in the company of his distracted mother; and shall to my dying day thrill when I call to mind the tone and countenance with which she exclaimed,

“How keener than a serpent’s tooth it is
To have a thankless child!”

I left the house in disgust, resolved that, whatever might be the consequence, I would never choose for my friend the man who was said to be “nobody’s enemy but his own.” And experience has served to confirm me in the resolution. I have generally found such persons “warm enemies” perhaps, but certainly cold friends—if men of “strong passions,”

passions," yet of little real sensibility—men, finally, who, with few exceptions, thought, felt, schemed, lived, for themselves, and themselves alone. In short, I have generally discovered reason in such cases exactly to reverse the estimate of the world, and to consider these persons as in fact "*every one's* enemy but their own." And here I shall conclude the chapter, in order to give the reader time to determine whether he ought not to come to the same conclusion with myself. And, having decided upon this point, I would entreat him further to consider, whether he can employ for himself, or impart to his children, a safer rule for the selection of friends, than the old-fashioned saying of my dear aunt Rachel—"Take for your friends those, and those only, who are the friends of God."

CHAP. X.

A *MERE* 'HONEST MAN' IS NOT 'THE
NOBLEST WORK OF GOD.'

IT was scarcely possible that the events recorded in the last chapter should not have filled me with disgust for extravagance, and all its train of associate vices. But this was not their only, nor, as my aunt would have said, their happiest result; they left me in the best possible mood for carrying into effect the prudential maxims contained in the *second* department of her code. He has a very limited acquaintance with human nature, who does not know our tendency, in avoiding one extreme, to run into the opposite. Accordingly, I sat down to the study of this division of the code with the keenest possible appetite,

petite, and rose up determined, whatever might be my practice as to other points, to become a prudent and an honest man.

But, having before discovered the uselessness of all vague and general resolutions, I determined to begin by accurately ascertaining the meaning of the words "honesty" and "prudence," as employed in my aunt's code. And, after nearly a day's severe study, I came to the conclusion, that "prudence" meant "a rigid attention to our own worldly interest;" and "honesty," the "exact payment of our debts."

As, moreover, I had previously felt the inconvenience of being called into action before I had proved my principles, I resolved, in the present instance, to prepare myself for action by much private discipline. Accordingly, I accustomed myself to hold long mental dialogues with "Prudence;" and, having an excellent portrait of my aunt sus-

pended over the fire-place, I used, in order to give these dialogues more effect, to personify Benevolence, or any gentle virtue, myself; and to make her, by means of her picture, personify Prudence. Thus circumstanced, I was accustomed to hold dialogues with the picture, of which, I venture to say, Erasmus himself need scarcely have been ashamed. Such, indeed, was the sort of familiarity I acquired in this sort of silent converse, that at length, whatever might be the occasion, I had nothing to do but to look at the picture, and I seemed to hear all that prudence and my aunt had to say on the occasion. But it is time the reader should be permitted to judge for himself of the effects produced by these dialogues upon my character and conduct.

In the first place, then, I was soon very sensibly mortified by finding myself altogether without a friend. For the fact is, that, in the eagerness of my conformity to my aunt's maxim, I had become

become either too prudent to choose a friend, or, if shosen, to commit myself to him. Friendship requires unreserve—which prudence, in my aunt's sense of the word, sternly prohibits. Friendship must be generous—mere prudence is harsh. Friendship must be a little blind and deaf—whereas mere prudence is all eye and ear for the faults of others. I remember, that, once or twice, when I was in danger of being betrayed into something like candour and openness by the frankness of a visitor, my aunt's picture seemed, like the celebrated Madona at Rome, almost to frown upon me for my imbecility.

In the next place, I soon became such an inveterate enemy to every thing new, as sometimes to involve myself in the most unpleasant consequences. Twice, for instance, I nearly forfeited my life by my pertinacious and romantic adherence to the practices of antiquity—first, by my

resolute rejection, in a violent attack of small-pox, to the then somewhat novel remedy of inoculation; and, secondly, by resolutely excluding, upon the authority of the ancients, every breath of air, in a fever, which required me to be kept as cool as possible. I am, moreover, firmly persuaded that I should have been among those who condemned Galileo to expiate upon the scaffold the novel crime of asserting the earth to move round the sun—on this great principle, that “ old falsehoods are better than new truths.”

Nor was this all. Prudence, like the lean kine of Egypt, soon devoured every nobler principle. I ceased to sympathise, to pity, to feel. If a case of charity presented itself, I did but look at the picture, and it said, or seemed to say, in language not seldom employed by my aunt, “ A fool and his money are soon parted;” “ A penny saved is a penny

penny got ;” “ Money makes the man ;” and who could resist such accumulated authorities ?

Perhaps, however, the reader may prefer facts to statements on this particular subject. I shall therefore candidly record an incident in my history, at this period, which fairly exhibits the state of my own mind, and the mortification to which it sometimes exposed me.

A society of Churchmen, who had, for the last century, been engaged, among other benevolent designs, in conveying the knowledge of Christianity to the Heathen, convened a meeting near my aunt’s mansion-house, to consider the means of extending to about sixty millions of poor idolatrous Hindoos the knowledge of Christianity. Now, whatever Religion and sound Wisdom might urge upon so plain a point, *mere* Prudence could not but be alarmed at an attempt, however quiet, to disturb the creed of sixty millions of people. Accordingly,

cordingly, having entered the assembly, I rose, and, to the admiration of my aunt, made the following oration.

“ I rise, Sir, to oppose the motion which has been submitted to this assembly, on the following grounds :—

“ In the first place, the Hindoos are savages, and Christianity was not designed for savages.

“ In the second place, the religion of the Hindoos is a very good religion—why, then, should we try to change it ?

“ In the third place, their religion has made them excellent slaves for centuries—why, then, teach them a religion which is fit only for freemen ?

“ In the fourth place, they are sunk so very deep in vice and misery that it is impossible to release them from it—why, then, attempt it ?

“ In the fifth place, who would think of beginning to convert foreign nations, till we have converted every one of our own people ?

“ Sixthly,

“ Sixthly, when the time comes for the general conversion of the world, some sign will be sent from Heaven to tell us of it.

“ Such, Sir, are my reasons for resisting the measure; and whoever promotes it, and opposes me, is an enthusiast, and an enemy to the King and to the Church of England.”

Having made my speech, I will own that I expected, as the very smallest return, the loud acclamations of the astonished assembly. But a most profound silence ensued; till a clergyman, who, as I then thought, looked old enough to know better, arose, and thus addressed the assembly:—

“ Instead, Sir, of replying directly to the reasonings of the speaker who has preceded me, I will simply put another case, and request his decision upon it. Suppose, instead of the present assembly, a thousand Peruvians convened on the banks of the Amazon, to take into

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consideration

consideration a supplication from the nations of Europe to supply them with that bark of Peru which is the only known antidote for a very large class of our diseases. And conceive, if you will, the preceding speaker, who, I am sure, would be happy to undertake the embassy, to be the advocate for these feverish and aguish nations to the only possessors of this antidote. Imagine him to arise amidst the tawny multitude, and, with much feeling and emphasis, to state, that at least sixty millions of people depended upon their determination for health and life. At once, I am persuaded, the cry of that multitude would interrupt the pleadings of the orator, and one, and all, would exclaim, ‘ Give them bark! give them bark! and let not an European perish, whom it is possible for a Peruvian to save.’ Thus far all would be well. But conceive, instead of the assembly being permitted to act upon this benevolent decision, some Peruvian,

ruvian, of an age in which the prevalence of policy or mere prudence over justice and benevolence is more intelligible and pardonable, to arise, and thus to address his countrymen :

“ ‘ Peruvians, you are far too precipitate. Consider, I beseech you, the character and circumstances of the persons for whom this privilege is demanded.

“ ‘ In the first place, they are civilized nations—they read and write ; they sleep in beds, and ride in coaches ; they wear coats and trowsers—who, then, will say that bark is meant for such persons as these ?

“ ‘ In the second place, their fevers and agues may have many excellencies with which we are unacquainted—why, then, attempt to cure them ?

“ ‘ In the third place, these fevers and agues assist exceedingly to thin their armies—why, then, strengthen them, merely to destroy ourselves ?

“ ‘ Fourthly, these fevers and agues are

so deep seated and violent, that it is impossible to cure them—why, then, attempt it ?

“ ‘ In the fifth place, who would think of curing foreign nations, till we have cured all the sick in Peru ?

“ ‘ Sixthly, when the time comes for the general cure of fevers and agues, I have no doubt that the Great Spirit will give us some sign from the mountains.

“ ‘ Such, Peruvians, are my reasons for opposing the wish of the speaker; and whoever promotes it, or opposes me, is a madman, and an enemy both to the Incas and the Great Spirit.’

“ Now, then,” continued the old clergyman, “ supposing the Peruvian orator thus to reason, I should be glad to know by what answer that young gentleman would repel his arguments.”

He then, to my infinite horror, sat down, and left me with the eyes of the assembly fixed upon me, as if waiting for my reply ; but not having any precisely

cisely ready, I thought it best to be taken suddenly ill, and to leave the room.

I was not, however, so easily to get rid of my speech and the reply to it. I scarcely dared shew my face in the county, where I was universally known, for some time, by the name of "the Peruvian." Indeed, almost every body seemed to rejoice in my mortification, except the immediate author of it. He was one of the first persons who visited me in college after my return from this meeting, and, taking me very kindly by the hand, he said, "I venture to hope that this slight pang may save you from many worse. And this it will do, if it leads you to examine and reject the principle on which I am disposed to think your opinion is founded."

"That," said I, proudly, "I am by no means likely to do; for it is nothing less than the indisputable maxim, '*Nul-lum numen abest si sit prudentia*;' or, as
my

my aunt translates it, ‘ Where prudence is, no divinity is absent.’ ”

“ With due deference,” replied the old gentleman, “ both to the author and translator of the maxim, I should rather say, that Where policy is, no virtue is present ; I am sure charity is not.”

“ Charity,” said I, “ you are to recollect, ‘ begins at home.’ ”

“ If it does,” replied he, “ it is not unlikely, I fear, also to end there.—Real charity, my young friend, descends from Heaven.—Allow me to tell you a story.—One of the biographers of Archbishop Usher tells us, that this prelate was wrecked upon a very desolate part of the coast. Under these circumstances, and in a most forlorn condition, he applied for assistance to a clergyman of a very prudent cast, stating, among other claims, his sacred profession. The clergyman rudely questioned the fact, and told him, peevishly, that he doubted whether he even knew the number of
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the Commandments. ‘ Indeed I do,’ replied the Archbishop, mildly: ‘ there are eleven.’ ‘ Eleven?’ answered the catechist: ‘ tell me the eleventh, and I will assist you.’

“ ‘ *Obey* the eleventh,’ said the Archbishop, ‘ and you certainly will assist me—A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another.’ ”

“ Now,” continued my visitor, “ this eleventh commandment is worth a volume of mere prudential maxims. Remember this, and perhaps it will be real prudence to burn all the rest.”

“ Perhaps it will,” said I—For the truth is, he spoke so tenderly, and so very like my aunt Rachel, and I had discovered mere prudence and honesty to be such unproductive and uncomfortable qualities, that I was nearly as anxious to try some other source of happiness as my adviser to recommend the trial.—“ Perhaps it will,” then, said I. And, accordingly, no sooner was he gone, than I
determined

determined upon the formal annihilation of this second part of the code; and, applying a pen-knife pretty resolutely to this portion of the parchment, I had soon the exquisite satisfaction of hearing it hiss in the fire. Moreover, fearing the fascination of my aunt's countenance, I sent the very same evening for a limner of considerable reputation, and engaged him, by a few masterly touches, to get rid of the afore-mentioned prudential, cold, calculating cast which predominated in her portrait. And this being accomplished, I further contracted with him to throw something of an opposite character into the mouth and eyes, by which I might be stimulated, to kindness. All which, I must add, he executed to my perfect satisfaction—so that whoever shall compare that picture with any other of my aunt, which still glitters in antiquated majesty upon the walls of the family mansion, will be delighted to discover how successfully in
this

this portrait, as in those of some other persons, art has kindly supplied the deficiencies, and remedied the defects, of nature.

I think it well, however, to add, that one of the evils arising out of this very seducing property of the fine arts is, that men are tempted to transfer it to the sketches they make of their own mind and character. But I love my readers too well, not earnestly to beseech them never, in such delineations, to borrow the flattering pencil of the artist. And that they may now, as they always ought before they go to rest, sit to themselves for a few moments, and, in so doing, avail themselves of the above caution, I will at once put an end to the chapter.

CHAP. XI.

THE WAY TO BE NO CHRISTIAN.

“**REAL** charity, then,” said I, repeating the old clergyman’s words, “according to this good man, descends from Heaven.”

Here was thesis enough for a very extensive argument; and I did not quit the subject till I had come to a fixed resolution to devote myself to the study of religion—a subject which, as it will be remembered, my aunt declared herself to have noticed “only in compliment to general opinion.”

Now, it is but just to myself to confess, that my resolution, on this occasion, was not dictated by the same motive with that of my aunt. I was by no means in good humour with the world;
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and, therefore, in no degree disposed to pay any deference to its opinions. But then, I was also violently out of humour with myself and my way of life; and this state of mind naturally prompted me to seek my happiness in any new pursuit. —I will acknowledge that my recent disappointments had for a moment shaken my confidence in my aunt's opinions—so that her contempt for religion, perhaps, a little exalted it in my esteem. But, if these suspicions carried me thus far, they did not lead me on to the desperate length of disputing the worth of the maxims on the subject of religion contained in the code. Though I could consent at the moment to abandon my aunt, I could not at once take so tremendous a leap as, simultaneously, to abandon her and those proverbs which I had valued perhaps more highly than herself. Indeed, had not my nature in itself abhorred precipitancy, the accredited and much-admired maxim of

“ looking

“looking before we leap,” stood in the way of all such sudden apostacy. I adopted, therefore, the half measure of studying the subject denounced by my aunt, but of studying it by the light of the maxims which she herself prescribed. Duty to myself seemed to require thus much—duty to my aunt to allow no more.

My reader may now, therefore, if he please, conceive me in my walks, in my chair, in my bed, by day and by night, endeavouring to thread the mazes of religious controversy with these mystical clues in my hand. And possibly he can predict the result of the attempt. But, lest he should fail, I think it right very faithfully to record it.

Now, in the first place, it is most certain that truth and error are not the same thing—that it is not indifferent what opinions we embrace—that the high and holy God is not alike satisfied with the mere fancies of man, and the
dictates

dictates of his own hallowed word. And, under the influence of these very obvious truths, I was actually settling down to a creed very like that which I had every week thoughtlessly or incredulously rehearsed in church, when, as my aunt had predicted, her first proverb, "Many men many minds," came to the rescue of my incredulity. "If," said I (very sagely, as my aunt would have thought) to myself, "many men have many minds—if there are almost as many opinions as human beings—who can have any right to decide between them?" And although it be true that the variety of opinions cannot change the truth—that the sun is equally bright, although every beholder should choose to deny that it shines—and that, although men have "many minds," God has but one:—as no one of these palpable truths had the good fortune to be conveyed in a trite popular maxim, they could endure no competition with the brief, pithy, pointed saying,

ing,

ing, "Many men many minds." In conclusion, as so many persons doubted, I decided to add myself to the community of doubters. — Cheerless, indeed, was the region into which I then entered. "Shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it," and upon the unfortunate creature who pitches his tent upon its cold and barren mountains.—But let us proceed.

Doubter as I was, there were moments when the overwhelming evidence of religion—when its correspondence with the wants and sufferings of a poor fallen creature—when the mild and touching eloquence of the sacred writings—when the glowing and awful pictures of an invisible world—a little disturbed my unbelief. But, at these moments, that second brief maxim, "Seeing is believing," never failed to come to the aid of the first, and to sustain its wavering authority. "If," said I to myself, "we are to believe only what we see, what can be more evident than that all the scenes of

an invisible world are but “airy nothings,” the heated visions of a distempered imagination?—It might, indeed, have occurred to me, that if we believe exclusively what we see, our belief will be confined to a very few points indeed. The Indian, for instance, must not believe that there are countries where the water hardens into ice—the inhabitants of the temperate zone must not admit that the sun continues above the horizon of any country for more than twenty-four hours—every man, in short, must peremptorily reject every fact which occurs at a time, hour, or place, that removes it from his ocular observation. But here again, as these plain truths were not so fortunate as to be conveyed in any light, portable, popular saying, they had little chance with those which are thus fortunate; and accordingly, even without eyes in my head, I should have continued, I believe, to exclaim, “Seeing is believing.”

It

It may be thought that, with two such powerful maxims at command, the rest of my aunt's proverbs would be superfluous. But whoever is of this opinion, is not well acquainted, I apprehend, with the melancholy state of a sceptical mind. Most of those who proclaim religion to be false, have, nevertheless, occasional suspicions of its truth. I have seen many stout declaimers against fanaticism, who, in sickness, or in danger, or even in the dark, have discovered, like Tiberius in a thunder-storm, very unequivocal symptoms of orthodoxy ; and I will freely own myself to have been of this number. Sometimes, moreover, a pointed sermon, cut a little deeper than it was to the credit of my consistency to admit. It was in such circumstances that I found a never-failing refuge in that third maxim of my aunt, " It is never too late to repent." " If," said I to myself, " I should chance to be wrong, I may at least mend whenever I please."

Nor

Nor must it be thought that the insertion of my aunt's fourth maxim in the code was a mere work of supererogation. Scarcely any thing more endangered my credulity than the services of the Church of England. Their mild and catholic spirit, their cheerful and affectionate language, their lofty and almost awful simplicity, at times so laid hold of the softer parts of my nature, that I found myself insensibly bowing my knees among her worshippers, and addressing the God of my fathers in the language they delighted to employ. And what might have been the final influence of these formularies upon me it is impossible to say, had not my very dutiful memory continually suggested to me the sentiment, "The nearer the church the farther from God." By dint of which very powerful maxim I easily arrived at the conclusion, That all churchmanship was hypocrisy; and that the nobler the prayers the greater the

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certainty

certainly of their being neither sincerely offered, nor mercifully accepted in Heaven.

And here let me do the Church of my country the justice to say, that her piety and her services are grievously disparaged, and that, by many excellent men. I know of no body of Christians where, on the whole, more piety is to be found. I know of none where the piety is of a nobler cast. I know of no services better calculated to chastise the excesses, without chaining down the free spirit, of devotion. One of the excellencies of the Church is, that the moderate generally love her. Another is this, that the immoderate usually condemn her. And a third, that her formularies contain a body of truths nearer to the opinions of all contending parties than the opinions of those parties are to each other; and that, consequently, they in a measure present a common centre to the disputants of all ages and countries.

tries. And when, to cheer my aged eyes, I conjure up those visions of universal harmony in the Church of Christ which many of my ancestors delighted to contemplate, I can fancy no hands which are better calculated to tie the holy bands of universal union and love than those of our mother the Church. It is true that her venerable garment is not without a few spots—spots, I grieve to say, inflicted by some of her unworthy children. But let them, in the strength of their God, arise; let them cleanse her from the smallest stain of a secular spirit, of bigotry, or of indifference which may cleave to her; let her be “brought to the King” in her own spotless and holy robe; and many “virgins”—many a community of pure and simple Christians, hitherto alienated from her community, partly by prejudice, partly by the misconduct of her professed friends—shall “become her

G 2 companions,”

companions," and shall "enter" with her "into the King's palace." I may not live to see the union; but my old veins seem to beat with new life, when I allow myself to contemplate, even at a distance, the day in which my honoured countrymen will all remember they are "brethren," and no longer "fall out by the way."

But I have digressed from the history of what I was at that time to describe, my present feelings. At the point of my story where this digression took place, nothing could be farther from my mind than any such thoughts or desires. I disliked Religion, and in the same degree disliked the Church.

And here I close this chapter, in order to give the reader an opportunity of asking himself one of the two following questions:

1st, Whether his own religion does not consist chiefly in bitter hostility to the forms of the Church of England?

2d,

2d, Whether it does not consist chiefly in empty reverence for those forms?

If the reader plead guilty to the charge involved in the last of these questions, I most affectionately beg to remind him how studiously the Church herself exposes this error, and how zealously she repels such heartless and unmeaning homage. If, on the contrary, he plead guilty to the former, I beg him to recollect, that a hatred of form is just as much bigotry, and just as little religion, as a mere attachment to it. And if, unhappily, he should be displeased with this information, all the revenge I will take is, to wish, and to pray, that he may become as good and as happy as the combined spirit and form of the Church of England have a tendency to render him. And happier or better than this, I expect to see no man on this side the grave.

CHAP. XII.

AN EVENT ABOUT WHICH NO SCEPTIC
EVER DOUBTED.

HOW long, without any change of circumstances, I might have continued in the same cheerless state, or to what lower depth of infidelity and wretchedness I might have sunk, it is impossible to say: but as I was one day sitting in my rooms, in an arm-chair which was the favourite scene of my musings, and was diligently reading a celebrated work on “ the hidden joys of free-thinking,” an express suddenly brought me the intelligence that my aunt Winifred was dead.

Dead!” said I to the servant: “What! suddenly, and without any warning?”

“Dead!” he replied; “and, as my mistress always said, ‘it is a happy release.’”

I asked

I asked no more questions; but leaped into a chaise, and proceeded direct to the family mansion. But the comment of the servant on the sudden death of my aunt continued to sound in my ears. The words he had used had, indeed, been as often in the mouth of his mistress as the bell chanced to toll in the parish; and what she had so liberally applied to others, he thought fairly due to herself. Familiar, however, as this saying was to every member of her family, I never seemed to have weighed the full meaning of it before; but now I found my attention irresistibly drawn to it. "If," said I to myself, "my poor aunt is gone to heaven; it is indeed a 'happy release' to escape from a world such as this. If she is even annihilated; it is better not to be than to be miserable. If, however, the Bible is true, and all my doubts and all her doubts are ill founded; then death may be very far from a 'happy release.'"

Surrounded by the terrible visions which this last supposition was likely to call up, I almost wished myself religious; and, at the moment, had I known the prayer, " Lord, I believe: help thou my unbelief," I do think that, between doubt and conviction, I should have been tempted to offer it.

When I arrived at home, the state of things was by no means such as either to raise my spirits, or to dissipate the sort of terror with which I regarded my aunt's fate. A sort of solemn awe seemed to reign through the family. Not a tear of affectionate sorrow appeared to be shed by the servants. No poor villagers came to inquire into the fate of their benefactress. No officious attendant on her sick or dying bed conveyed to the gloomy circle the cheering intelligence of a single prayer she had offered, of a single hope she had expressed, or of a single sign of inward and unutterable peace and joy which she

she had made. No person, however familiar with the page of inspiration, dared at that instant to utter a wish, "let my latter end be like hers."

It was scarcely possible for me not to express a desire to see all that remained of her who had been my earliest and most constant friend. Otherwise, I will freely own, that I should have been glad to have escaped the spectacle. It is a singular feature of the mind, that the least religious persons are often the most superstitious. The sailor, perhaps amidst a volley of oaths, nails the propitious horse-shoe to the mast. The solution of this fact probably is, that the man of piety, whilst he believes in the existence of a world of spirits, feels himself to be under the protection of that merciful Being who controuls them all; but the irreligious man, though he believes little, suspects much, and has nothing to oppose to his possible dangers. Be this, however, as it may with regard to others,

certainly few persons were more truly superstitious and timid than myself. I always shrunk from a scene of death; felt much more than I chose to confess at the flight of what is called a "coffin" from the fire, or at the appearance of a "winding-sheet" in the candle; and never failed to cross the church-yard with a very wary eye, hurried step, and palpitating bosom. The reader, then, will not wonder that I felt the dislike I have expressed to a visit to my aunt's chamber. Perhaps this dread was increased by my having lately perused, in the works of some of the Port-Royalists, the terrific history of the conversion of their founder, Bruno; which I here record, for the benefit of persons unread in their innumerable and immeasurable volumes.

Bruno, it appears, had an intimate friend, of a profligate character, of the name of Raymond. Raymond suddenly fell to the ground in a fit of apoplexy.

No

No doubts were entertained of his being dead : and he was accordingly borne, by torch-light, in an open coffin, under the covering of a pall, to his grave. Bruno was, of course, among the mourners. The chapel was hung with black, and lighted by innumerable tapers. The anthem of death began——when suddenly, says the annalist, the pall was slowly lifted, the supposed corpse erected itself on the bier, fixed its glazed eyes upon Bruno, and, in the hollow voice of anguish, solemnly pronounced the awful words——“ *Justo judicio Dei appellatus sum! Justo judicio Dei judicatus sum! Justo judicio Dei condemnatus sum!*”—and then, with a hollow groan of despair, fell back to speak no more!

Now, it is very true that the authority of this story is not remarkably good; but very slight evidence of danger will satisfy a coward; and such, in the largest sense of the word, had I the misfortune to be.

It is not easy, therefore, to conceive
the

the sensation of dread with which I heard the door fasten that enclosed me in the same room with the breathless body of my aunt. Nevertheless, by that sort of controul exercised over our senses by terrible objects, I felt my eyes irresistibly fixed upon the countenance I had so often watched, studied, feared. And, though I saw nothing of those supernatural horrors which serve to swell the stories of superstition; though my aunt neither sighed from her coffin, nor arose in it to address me; yet I seemed to see on her pale forehead a frown of deep and unutterable despair, which spoke terrible things to my soul. What would I have given, at the moment, to discover any sign of peace or joy—to hear a voice which said, “To me, to die is gain!”

I know of no circumstances in which it is so difficult to be a sceptic, and in which the truths of religion take such easy and complete possession of the mind,

as

as in the chamber of death. Who can believe the prostrate ruin before us, to be all that survives of man? The plant and the animal reach their maturity before they perish; but the soul is plainly only in the infancy of its powers, when the body falls a victim to disease — the imagination has scarcely tried its wings; the judgment is only beginning to exercise its powers; the memory is continually adding to its stores; every faculty, in short, is either developing new powers, or accumulating fresh possessions. And can God have made such a creature as man in vain? Can he have struck off from himself so bright a ray of intelligence only to extinguish it in a moment? If not, then how monstrous is scepticism, how reasonable is religion, and how essential a Saviour to cancel the faults of a creature at once so highly endowed and so very deep in guilt!

These, and many such reflections, hurried through my mind in the few moments

ments I passed in my aunt's chamber. I will not say that they left me convinced of the truth of religion, but they disposed me to believe that there was no true happiness without it.

My first interview with my surviving aunt was of the most painful nature. Her sister had so strictly interdicted all religious intercourse between us, and my own growing gloom and severity had so strengthened the barrier, that she was completely a stranger to my opinions. When we met, I said nothing; and she was, after a long silence, able only to say, "We have both lost a friend, Sancho: God grant that we may love one another the better." I could see, indeed, that many weighty subjects were pressing on her mind; but we had so few opinions and feelings in common, that all communication was very difficult between us.

It was not long, moreover, before I discovered another obstacle to any such intercourse.

intercourse. Upon reading her sister's will, what was my astonishment and indignation to find, that, in spite of every pledge formerly given, she had left me only a very moderate legacy, and my aunt Rachel the bulk of her fortune! In the quickness of my resentment, I did not fail to attribute this act of the one sister to the policy and stratagems of the other; and, accordingly, I determined to revenge myself by unalterable silence and chilling disdain. True it was that my aunt looked most provokingly simple and innocent—that her heart seemed to be absorbed by the loss itself, instead of dwelling upon its consequences—that she discovered, in her manner at least, none of the hatred said by the Roman Annalist to be felt towards the injured by those who have injured them. But what of all this? She was rich, and I was poor—and who could forgive such a mortal offence?

But as I am now entering upon a
period

period of my history with every movement of which my now only remaining aunt was intimately connected, I reserve the account of our mutual proceedings for a new chapter. In the mean time the reader will not fail to observe, that the want of religion was, in my case, accompanied by none of the lofty qualities with which the imagination of the irreligious is accustomed to adorn it. Nor could I ever, by the strictest examination, discover the smallest tendency in irreligion to produce great or generous qualities. The man who does not love God, rarely fails intensely to love himself: and the mind cannot thus stoop from the highest to the lowest object of veneration, without a corresponding debasement. He who would be great, must contemplate great objects: and whilst the philosopher prescribes to those who aspire to the sublime in conduct or literature, to present to themselves some "beau idéal," some shadowy
image

image of perfection, the saint sees in his God the Perfect Being of which philosophy dreamt. In the shades of his retirement, or on the steps of the altar, he surrounds himself with Deity—he launches out into the depth of the Divine perfections—he becomes great, by gazing upon Immeasurable Greatness—he becomes, in a measure, “like” God, for he sees him “as he is’.

How little, on the contrary, those become who take the opposite course, may be fully ascertained by reading the following chapter.

CHAP. XIII.

JOURNAL OF A SELFISH AND DISSAP-
POINTED MAN.

I HAVE promised the reader to exhibit in this chapter an example of the debasing influence of irreligion on the character. Ashamed am I to say, that the unfortunate creature to be thus exhibited is myself. It so chances, however, that I am released from the overwhelming task of delineating afresh my own deformities, by having found, tied up in a bundle of manuscript arguments against Christianity, the following page of a diary written at the period at which this history has now arrived. The reader, when he has examined this journal of about twelve hours of my life, will not fail to acknowledge my extraordinary candour in thus presenting it to him. It
may

may fairly, I conceive, have prefixed to it the title which stands at the head of this chapter.

“ Eight o’clock. Awoke, if it can be called awaking from that which is not sleep—Dream’t all night of unpleasant things—fancied myself sitting in my own carriage, which suddenly turned to a dirty cart—fancied Roger the butler treading on my toes in his haste to make a bow to my aunt Rachel—fancied myself looking over the family title-deeds, which changed in a moment into college bills.

“ Eight to nine. Tossed up and down in my bed—Could not find one single comfortable subject to think about.

“ Ten. Breakfasted alone—The sun very bright—the birds very noisy—both extremely troublesome—Scolded Roger for burning the toast. N. B. Roger never does right—took down my aunt Rachel’s picture from the wall in my study—no
truth

truth in physiognomy, otherwise aunt Rachel's picture could not be so very agreeable.

“ Eleven o'clock. Read from eleven to two Boileau's Satires—Satire very pleasant reading, especially when it cuts deep—vastly comfortable to know that men are not so good and wise as they seem.

“ Two to three. Tried to satirize my aunt and the parson after the manner of Boileau ; but failed ; I believe, for the want of incident.

“ Three o'clock. My aunt knocked at the door and begged me to walk with her—refused roughly ; but went out half an hour afterwards into a path in which she was sure to see me—The smell of the May and Lilacs quite overpowering—wish there were none—In very low spirits—thought a good deal about my aunt Winifred's death—life bad—death worse—Aunt Rachel deluded, but happy in her ignorance.

Four

“ Four o'clock. Saw my aunt walking with the old parson and his wife—am sure they were talking of me—Parson very mild, but always preaches *at* me—preached last Sunday on the happiness of religion, on purpose to plague me—Nothing so vexatious as to be told that others are happy when we are not.

“ Five o'clock. Dined with my aunt, the parson, and the lawyer—all looked suspiciously at me—Parson begged for his school—always begging, though I must say he gives largely himself.

“ Seven o'clock. My aunt went away with the lawyer—suppose to plot, as before—Left alone with the parson—did not like it—so very gentle, impossible to quarrel with him—All the parish, except the publicans, speak well of him—hate men whom every body praises—Parson very talkative—A weak man; seems to be pleased with every thing—praised the church, though he has only a poor vicarage—spoke kindly about my aunt
Winifred,

Winifred, though she left him no legacy—all hypocrisy.—Drew me insensibly to talk on the evidences of religion—very strong on that point—tender in his manner—seemed to love and pity me — called God ‘ our Father ’ — spoke of the world as one large family — said we should love one another as brothers — all beautiful, if true.

“ Eight o’clock. My aunt and lawyer not returning, parson asked me to walk in the park—afraid to refuse, lest he should think ill of me—Parson a quick eye for the beauties of nature—looked at the landscape as if he thought it all his own—heard him say to himself, ‘ My Father made it all ’—Not so weak as I thought—full of information on practical subjects; Count Rumford, Howard, patent lamps, cheap cookery, smoky chimneys, schools, medicine, &c. &c.—Useful man in a parish; but always drawing to one subject—Wonderful to see a man’s heart so taken up with religion—

ligion—Came to a very pretty cottage—asked whose it was—Listened to a touching story—parson wept sometimes as he told it—kind-hearted old man—Went into the cottage—saw a young creature on the bed of death, without doubts, without fears; longing to be gone: she said, very emphatically, ‘To depart and to be with Christ is far better’—Envied her.

“ Ten o’clock. Went to my room—thought much of what I had heard and seen—compared my poor aunt Winifred with this young creature—no comparison in their state—Opened aunt Rachel’s Bible at the account of the two Apostles in the dungeon at Philippi—very striking—‘At midnight they sang praises, and the prisoners heard them’—*heard* them, but did not sing themselves—perhaps returned groans for praises—Prison possibly the only place in Philippi in which the voice of joy was heard at midnight—Much power in religion—

ligion—Prayed more heartily than I have done for years—felt more comfortable.”

Here ends the journal which I promised the reader; and, if I am not mistaken, it has let him more into the secrets of my mind than any portrait taken at this distance of time could have done. — And here, as it is not impossible that he may be sufficiently interested, especially in the character of the old clergyman, to feel a desire to hear the story of the young dying person to whom the journal alludes, I will endeavour to tell it as nearly as possible in the words of the old clergyman.

I had perceived that when we reached the cottage, he paused opposite to it, as if doubtful whether to go in. I then asked to whom it belonged. After a little hesitation, he answered, “ Will you, Sir, accept, instead of a short an-

swer

swer to that question, a somewhat long story? I do think it will interest you; and if not, I am sure that you know how kindly to forgive an old man for talking at length upon a very favourite topic." I could not but assent to a proposal so kindly introduced, and he therefore proceeded in his narration nearly as follows. —But the story shall have a chapter to itself.

CHAP. XIV.

THE DYING COTTAGER.

“FANNY came to our village at the age of eighteen — one of the most lovely creatures you ever saw. Her eyes were full of intelligence, her complexion bright, and her smile such as at once to fix the eye and win the affection of every one who conversed with her. She was gay, good humoured, and obliging;—but without religion. She had left her father’s house to come here as servant at a public-house. In this situation, the worst that might have been anticipated happened. She was ruined in character; left the public-house when she could no longer retain her situation; married the partner of her guilt, and came to live in this little cottage.

tage. There, as is usually the case in marriages where neither party respect the other, he first suspected, then ill-treated her. When her child was born, his hatred and anger seemed to increase. He treated both with cruelty; and, after some time, succeeded in ruining her temper, and almost breaking her heart. At length, after a quarrel, in which it is to be feared both had been almost equally violent, he threw her over the hedge of their garden, and brought on the disease of which she is now dying. During the two years in which all these events had occurred, her neglect of God and of religion had, I suppose, increased; all that was amiable in her character vanished; and she learned to swear and to scold in almost as furious a tone as her husband. I could not learn that, during all this time, she had more than once discovered the smallest sense of her misconduct, or fears about futurity. Once, indeed, her neigh-

hours told me, that, when she heard the clergyman in his sermon describe the happiness of Heaven, she burst into tears, and quitted the church.

“It happened, that, on a fine summer’s evening, (you will excuse me, Sir, for referring to the small part which I acted in this history), I was taking my rounds in my parish, to look after my little flock, and came, at length, to this cottage, where I remember to have paused for a moment to admire the pretty picture of rural life which it presented. The mists of the evening were beginning to float over the valley in which it stood, and shed a sort of subdued, pensive light on the cottage and the objects immediately around it. Behind it, at the distance perhaps of half a mile, on the top of a lofty eminence rose, the ancient spire of the village church. The sun still continued to shine on this higher ground, and shed all its glories on the walls of the sacred edifice. ‘There,’ I
could

could not help saying to myself, ‘ is a picture of the world. Those without religion are content to dwell in the vale of mists and shadows; but the true servants of God dwell on the holy hill, in the perpetual sunshine of the Divine Presence.’

“ I entered the cottage, and was much struck with the appearance of its owner. She looked poor; and the house was destitute of many of those little ornaments which are indications, not merely of the outward circumstances, but of the inward comforts of the inhabitants. She was sitting busily at work with her sister.— I always feel it, Sir, both right and useful to converse a good deal with the poor about their worldly circumstances. Not only does humanity seem to require this, but I find it profitable to myself: for after, as it were, taking the depth of their sufferings, I am ashamed to go home and murmur at Providence, or scold at my servants, for some trifling
 H 3 deficiency

deficiency in my own comforts. Besides, I love to study the mind of man in a state of trial—to see how nobly it often struggles with difficulties—and how, by the help of God, it is able to create to itself, amidst scenes of misery and gloom, a sort of land of Goshen, in which it lives, and is happy.

“ After conversing with her for some time on topics of this kind, and discovering her to be a person of strong feelings deeply wounded, of fine but uncultivated powers, and of remarkable energy of expression, I naturally proceeded to deliver to her a part of that solemn message with which, as the minister of religion, I am charged: and not discovering in her the smallest evidence of penitential feeling—being able, indeed, to extract nothing more from her than a cold and careless acknowledgment that ‘ she was not all she ought to be ’—I conceived it right to dwell, in my conversation with her, chiefly upon those awful passages of
Scripture

Scripture designed by Providence to rouse the unawakened sinner. Still, Sir, feeling then, as I do always, that the weapon of the Gospel is rather love than wrath, I trust that I did not so far forsake the model of my gracious Master, as to open a wound without endeavouring to shew how it might be bound up. Few persons are, in my poor judgment, frightened into Christianity: God was not in the ‘ earthquake ’ — he was not in the ‘ storm ’ — but in ‘ the small still voice.’

“ After a pretty long conversation, I left her, altogether dissatisfied, I will own, with her apparent state of mind. Nay, such was my proneness to pronounce upon the deficiencies of a fellow-creature, that I remember complaining, on my return home, with some degree of peevishness I fear, of the hardness of her heart. I would fain hope, Sir, that I have learnt, by this case, to form unfavourable judgments of others more slowly; and in dubious, or even appa-

rently bad cases, to ‘believe,’ or, at least, to ‘hope, all things.’

“Notwithstanding, however, my disappointment as to the state of her feelings, it was impossible not to feel a strong interest in her situation. Accordingly, I soon saw her again. But neither did I then discover any ground for hoping that her heart was in the smallest degree touched by what had been said to her. But, at a short distance of time, as I was one day walking in my garden and musing on some of the events of my own happy life, and especially on that merciful appointment of God which had made me the minister of peace to the guilty, instead of the stern disperser of the thunders of a severer dispensation, I was roused by the information that this poor young creature desired to see me.

“One of her poor neighbours, who came to desire my attendance, informed me, with apparent tenderness, that Fanny ‘was very ill;’ that, as she expressed it, she

she had been in a very ' unked state
 ' since I saw her, and that she hoped I
 ' would be kind enough to come and
 ' comfort her.' ' God 'grant,' I said to
 the poor woman, ' that she may be in a
 ' state to be comforted.' ' That she is,
 ' Sir,' said the woman: ' she has suffered
 ' a deal since you were with her. The
 ' boards be very thin between our
 ' houses, and I hear her, by day and by
 ' night, calling upon God for mercy.
 ' It would break your heart to hear her,
 ' she is so very sad. Tom (her husband)
 ' scolds and swears at her; but she begs,
 ' as she would ask for bread, " Let me
 ' " pray, Tom; for what will become of
 ' " me if I die in my sins?" '

" This account disposed me, of course,
 to make the best of my way to the cot-
 tage. I soon reached it; and there, to
 be sure, I did see a very touching spec-
 tacle. Her disease, which her fine com-
 plexion had before concealed, had made
 rapid strides in her constitution. Her

colour came and went rapidly ; and she breathed with difficulty. Her countenance was full of trouble and dismay.

“ It was evident, as I entered the room, how anxious she had been to see me. At once she began to describe her circumstances ; informed me, that, even before my first visit, her many and great sins had begun to trouble her conscience ; that although her pride had then got the better of her feelings of shame and grief, this conversation had much increased them ; that she had since, almost every evening, visited the house of a neighbour, to hear her read the Scriptures and other good books ; that she was on the edge of the grave, without peace or hope ; that she seemed, (to use her own strong expression) ‘ to see God frowning upon her in every cloud that passed over her head.’

“ Having endeavoured to satisfy myself of her sincerity, I felt this to be a case where I was bound and privileged

to

to supply all the consolations of religion ; to lead this broken-hearted creature to the feet of a Saviour ; and to assure her, that if there she shed the tear of real penitence, and sought earnestly for mercy, He, who had said to another mourner, ‘ Thy sins are forgiven thee,’ would also pardon, and change, and bless her.

“ I will not dwell upon the details of this and many other similar conversations. Imperfectly as I discharged the holy and happy duty of guiding and comforting her, it pleased God to bless the prayers which we offered together to the Throne of Mercy ; and this poor, agitated, comfortless creature became, by degrees, calm and happy.

“ You will not, Sir, I trust, place me among those who are ready to mistake every strong turn in the tide of the feelings for religion. On the contrary, all sudden changes of character are, I think, to be examined with a wary, though not
with

with an uncharitable eye. There are, indeed, innumerable happy spirits which surround the throne of God ; but all of them bear in their hands ‘ palms ’—the signs, at once, of contest and of victory. I was far more anxious, therefore, to know that her penitence was sincere, than that her joy was great. But, indeed, it was not long possible to doubt of either. The rock was struck, and there daily gushed out fresh streams of living water. New and most attractive qualities daily appeared in her. She became gradually meek, humble, affectionate, and self-denying. Her time was divided between the few family duties she was able to discharge, and the study of the Scriptures, which she learned to read fluently during her six months’ sickness. She bent every faculty of her body and mind to the task of reclaiming her husband. And a more affecting picture can scarcely be imagined, than this interesting creature

rising

rising on the bed of anguish to calm his anger, to melt him by accents of tenderness, to beseech him to unite in her dying prayer for mercy. Indeed, her conduct to him is not the least striking evidence of her change of mind. In the conversations I have heard between them, she takes so much of the blame for all that is past upon herself, that I should never have suspected his misconduct but from the accounts of their friends. But there are other circumstances, no less decisive to my mind, of her sincerity. I observe, for instance, that, far from the sense of her offences being a mere transient emotion, she rarely speaks of them without a blush. And as she feels the colour thus rush unbidden into her cheek, I have heard her say more than once, ‘ Oh! how sin comes up in one’s face!’—Another very satisfactory feature in her religion is her extraordinary tenderness for the souls of others. She sends for all her young friends, and, in
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the most solemn and touching manner, warns them of her past errors, and tells them of her present happiness. And when a poor creature, whose offences were of a like kind with her own, chanced to settle in a cottage near her, I found she had crawled, though with much pain and risk, to the house, giving this reason for the undertaking, That any other visitor would be ‘ too good to speak to such a sinner. I can tell her,’ she said, ‘ that I have been as guilty as herself ; and that, since God has pardoned me, he will, if she seeks mercy, pardon her.’ A part of this anxiety about others springs, I believe, from the extraordinary degree of emotion with which she regards that state of eternal punishment, on the very verge of which she conceives herself to have stood. One day, as I entered her room, she said, ‘ I have been longing, Sir, to see you. I have been reading in “ the Book ” of a man who enlarged his barns, and said to his

his

his soul, "Soul, take thine ease;" but a voice said to him, "This night thy soul is required of thee." Now, Sir, *who* required his soul?" I answered, 'God.' 'Then,' she said, 'that poor man was on the way to the bad place, I fear.' 'I fear he was,' I replied. 'Ah!' she said, 'I thought so!'—and the hectic of her cheek instantly changed to a deadly white.—I am delighted also to discover one other circumstance. She is, as I said, full of peace and joy; but, then, her peace and joy are derived exclusively from one source. There is a picture in Scripture of which her state continually reminds me—I mean that of the poor creature pressing through the crowd to touch the hem of our Lord's garment. Such, I may say, is the perpetual effort of her mind. She renounces all hopes of Heaven founded either on herself or any human means; and relies only on that 'virtue' which goes out of the 'great Physician,' to
heal

heal the diseased, and to save the guilty. When she partakes of the sacred rite which commemorates his death, such is the deep solemnity of her feelings, such her holy peace and joy, that you would think she actually felt the presence of the Lord ; and that, in another instant, she would ‘ spread her wings, and flee away, and be at rest.’

“ But, Sir, why do I continue to describe her, when you may judge of her for yourself? Pray come with me to the cottage. I think you will have no cause to regret the visit.”

I need not tell the reader that I complied with the desire of the old clergyman ; nor shall I dwell upon the scene to which I have already adverted : I will only say, that I did indeed there ‘ see how a Christian could die ’ — that I felt it impossible to continue a sceptic, when I marked in her countenance and language the power of religion — that I
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can trace back to that period a great change and improvement in my own character — that I discovered, even in the short time I spent by her dying bed, much evidence of the precision with which her pastor had described the source of her hopes and joys. I perceived that no part of her happiness was gained by shutting her eyes upon her own guilt. She remembered it—she acknowledged it—she blushed for it—she wept over it;—but, then, she raised her eyes from herself to the cross of her Saviour, and seemed no longer either to fear or to doubt. It is said of a celebrated Infidel, the motto of whose banner, in his crusade against religion, was ‘ *Ecrasez l’Infâme*,’ that, on his dying bed, he conceived himself to be perpetually haunted by the terrific image of his bleeding Lord. That hallowed image seemed also to be present with her. But, far from shrinking from the vision, she appeared afraid of letting it go.

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Her eyes seemed sometimes to wander, as if in search of it; and then to rise to Heaven in gratitude for what she had seen. This sacred name was ever on her lips; and, as my old friend afterwards told me, she died breathing out, in interrupted sentences, that most solemn of all human supplications, "By thine agony and bloody sweat; by thy cross and passion; by thy precious death and burial; by thy glorious resurrection and ascension; and by the coming of the Holy Ghost; good Lord, deliver us."

Having thus fulfilled my promise of relating the simple story told by the venerable clergyman, I shall resume the account of myself in a new chapter.

CHAP. XV.

AN ALMOST INCURABLE MAN RESTORED
WITHOUT SENDING HIM TO A MAD-
HOUSE.

I TRUST the reader has not so far lost the thread of my history as to forget that he left me retiring to bed after my walk and conversation with the old clergyman. I slept quietly, and rose in better temper than usual. But I could by no means cease to look with suspicion on my aunt's conduct; and, more especially, I felt disposed to complain of her long and frequent interviews with the lawyer, mentioned above. Nor did the day produce any event calculated to allay my anger: on the contrary, several circumstances contributed to sharpen the edge of my resentment. In the first place,

place, I found that my aunt had, without the smallest communication with me, summoned a general meeting of the tenantry of the estate—to whom, I felt no doubt, she designed to expose my recent disappointment, and her own triumph. Secondly, and this I took exceedingly ill, considering my known hostility to the education of the poor, it appeared that she had ordered the first stone to be laid of a new parish-school. Thirdly, I discovered that she had determined to enlarge the alms-house, which I always, though in opposition I will own to general opinion, considered as an eye-sore from the dining-room window. Fourthly, I caught the gardener, acting under my aunt's express authority, in the very act of cutting down a branch of a fine oak in the park, in order to let in a view of the spire of the village church. Fifthly, I collected from my own servant, who, with the clothes, professed to adopt the opinions of his master, that my
aunt

aunt had been busily engaged with the old clergyman in ferreting out from the library every free-thinking book; had actually conveyed them into an out-house; had deposited them carefully upon two or three bundles of faggots; and was probably on the eve of consigning them to the same fate with the books of magic in the first ages of Christianity. Sixthly, and lastly, I found that, while I had been walking out, my aunt had herself entered the study, and, with a hammer and an infinity of nails, had fastened up her own picture in such a manner as to be absolutely immovable, in the very spot from which I had taken it down. This last measure was perfectly intolerable. Was I not merely to bear the occasional burthen of her bodily presence, but to have her image pursuing me even into my retirement; haunting me, like a spectre, by night and by day? “Is this,” said I, “her charity? Can the old clergyman justify

“ tify this? Would he not have been
 “ better employed in checking this spi-
 “ rit of insult and despotism, than in
 “ carrying, as I see him at this moment,
 “ those noble volumes of Hobbes, and
 “ Chubb, and Collins, to their funeral
 “ pile?” It was not that I had not
 begun to detest these volumes myself:
 still, in the present state of my mind, I
 regarded each of these unhappy authors
 as little short of martyrs to feminine in-
 trigue and priestly bigotry, and could
 have almost drawn a sword, if I had
 worn one, in defence of those disho-
 noured volumes.

In this state of agitation I passed the
 day; slept ill, and rose late. At ten
 o'clock, however, I was surprised by a
 summons from my aunt, begging me to
 attend her in the library. After some
 hesitation, as it seemed to promise me
 an opportunity of protesting against
 these tyrannical proceedings, I deter-
 mined to clothe myself in appropriate
 thunders,

thunders, and to obey her summons. I accordingly descended, opened the door with much dignity, and found my aunt with some parchments in her hand, and, seated at her side, her now apparently inseparable companions, the lawyer and the vicar. She and the old clergyman rose to meet me—both, I must say, with countenances which left it almost impossible to be angry. We took our seats, and, after a little pause, my aunt began—

“ I have been examining, my dear Sancho, with much attention, the particulars of my sister’s will.”

“ It is the last thing, aunt,” I replied, “ that I have any disposition to examine.”

She proceeded, without noticing my answer—“ I have always considered it as one of the first duties of the living to watch over the reputation of the dead ; and, among other means of guarding them from reproach, I conceive one of
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the most important to be the endeavouring to repair any injury which, in a moment of infirmity or mis-information, they may have inflicted."

"Very true, aunt," said I; "and now for the application of this remark."

"I think, then," continued she, "that my poor sister has unguardedly inflicted such an injury; and I now call upon you, Sancho, to assist me in repairing it."

"What injury do you mean, aunt?" said I.

"You shall hear," she replied. "My sister educated you, Sancho, to be her heir. She promised you the guardianship of her estate and of her tenants — the privilege of being the friend and the father of all the poor villagers around. In some unguarded moment, or prompted, perhaps, by her unmerited regard for me, she has made a will, giving you a mere legacy, and me the bulk of her fortune. Now it seems to me, Sancho, to be but common justice to one so dear to

us both, to reverse the terms of the will; and, though perhaps a proverb or two" (she said, smiling) "might be found in opposition to such a course of proceeding, to give the fortune to you, and to keep the legacy myself. In executing this project, my dear boy, I have taken the advice of one of these gentlemen"—pointing to the old clergyman, whose face was bathed in tears during the whole of this transaction—"and have borrowed the professional assistance of the other. All that now remains is for you to transfer to me your legacy. And because I wish, Sancho, to be in your debt, I will beg of you my favourite lodge in the corner of the park, which you shall have the pleasure of enlarging and adorning for my residence. There, unless you constrain me to live for a time with you, I should wish to spend the rest of my life. I shall there enjoy the retirement which you know I so much love—and which may, I hope, be allowed

I

lowed to an old, useless woman. There, also, I shall be near my poor neighbours. There I may seek that ‘better country,’ where we shall neither weep nor offend any more. There, also, I shall hope to hear, my dear Sancho, what it will be the joy of my heart to know, that you are good and happy yourself, and a blessing to all around you. I have summoned the tenants to-morrow, and I beg of you to receive them as their master and friend.”

Need I tell the reader with what mingled emotions of astonishment, shame, gratitude, and love I received this declaration of my aunt. I was silent at the moment; and I must beg to be silent now. I remember, that at the time I could only weep; and now, at the distance of thirty years, I feel far more disposed to shed an additional tear over the honoured grave of my benefactress and friend, than to describe my very imperfect manner of acknowledging her greatness,

ness, and my own baseness and ingratitude.

But, because I do not choose to enter upon the description of this particular scene, is it necessary that I should also, at this very point, somewhat abruptly cut short my simple tale? It is—and I will honestly confess the reason.

It appears, then, to me, that I have been considerably too explicit as to the events of my own life, and the failings of one of my near relatives, to render it desirable the readers of this volume should be able, at once, to point to the hand from which it proceeds. But if I were to continue the narrative with equal precision through the latter stages of my life, such an exposure of the family would be inevitable. Although, therefore, whatever I dare reveal I will; I must yet take the liberty of a biographer, in drawing a veil over the rest.

My first step then, on taking possession of my property, was earnestly to request

my aunt's society in my house. I soon learnt to love her tenderly. And having convinced myself, by minute examination, that she owed all her charms and comforts to religion, I was led to carry all my wants, and infirmities, and guilt to the steps of that Altar of Mercy where never suppliant knelt in vain. There I sought peace; and there, by the mercy of God, I found it. The dove, which could discover no "resting place" elsewhere for the "sole of her foot," returned, and found it in the ark of her God. —I respected religion for a time for my aunt's sake, but I soon learnt to love it for its own. Then, indeed, I may venture to say, that it would have been very difficult to find two people happier than ourselves. There are persons, I know, who entertain a widely different conception of religion—who receive a proposition to devote themselves to the service of God as they would a scheme to immure them in a dungeon which the sun never

never visits, and where the cheerful notes of nature and the music of the human voice are never heard. But, whatever those may say who have made no trial of the happiness of religion, let not any of my readers, young or old, believe them. " I have been young, and now am old ;" and in the many wanderings of my worldly pilgrimage have visited most of the fabled sources of human happiness. I stooped to drink of their waters, and always discovered them to be either tasteless or bitter. Still thirsting for happiness, I turned from these to drink at the fountain-head of devotion ; and there all my fondest hopes have been realized. Religion has, indeed, shut me out from the circle of tumultuous joys, and dubious amusements ; but has abridged me of no real pleasure. On the contrary, it immeasurably multiplies the means and capacities of happiness. It invites us to

the cultivation of all our nobler powers, by supplying a new field and loftier object for them:—it unlocks to the imagination the glories of an invisible world—it calls out the best feelings of the heart, by allying us to all the world—it surrounds us with dear friends, who overlook our infirmities in their busy efforts to subdue their own — it raises us above the atmosphere of the world's troubles, into the stiller regions of hope and joy—it unites us with the highest and tenderest of Beings, enables us to hold sweet and solemn communion with Him, to call Him our Father and our Friend — it fills us with hope that He who died for the guilty has pity upon us, and that, behind the veil which hides him from the world, he is quickening our drowsy powers, and qualifying us for the enjoyments of the saints in glory. And is not this happiness? And must not all who have tasted of it, when asked, “ will ye also
go

go away?" with one heart and voice reply, " Lord, to whom shall we go — thou hast the words of eternal life."

But, to proceed in our history —

Although the lodge was enlarged and ornamented according to my aunt's own fancy ; and although we contrived, there also, to let in a view of the village church, she never occupied it : for though she made a faint struggle to escape, when I was united, at the distance of some years, to a daughter of her most intimate friend, we knew her value too well not to detain her.

It may, perhaps, amuse the reader to hear of a fête prepared for his mistress by Roger the butler—a very capital man in the family—on the first Fifth of November which succeeded my establishment in my mansion.—The family had always been much signalized by its attachment to Church and King ; and it had been customary, ever since the days of the Stuarts, to proclaim this attachment to

at least half a dozen surrounding counties, by an enormous bonfire lighted up on the top of our hill. I did not think it right to set aside so loyal a custom, but only to prevent the excesses which so often accompany it—and by which, I am well persuaded, neither the Church nor the King are at all benefited. Accordingly, some of the faggots were prepared. But Roger, a person of no small ingenuity, having discovered, a few days before, the immense hoard of free-thinkers and faggots which my aunt and the old vicar had collected and forgotten in the out-house, he caused them to be secretly conveyed to the scene of conflagration; and, having earnestly solicited the attendance of the family on the occasion, though without signifying his reason, we ascended the hill, and the old man had the singular satisfaction of seeing his mistress both amused and gratified with the result of his ingenuity. It was, indeed, curious to see her, at the
first

first *auto da fé* at which she ever presided, in the true spirit of a Spanish Inquisitor, hurl back to the flames, with her gold-headed cane, a volume of Shaftesbury, which had leapt presumptuously from the fire.—Nor did the inventions of Roger terminate here. Having learnt something of the distinct character of the authors to be thus consigned by a family act to total oblivion, he determined that the title-pages, at least, of each of these volumes should die a sort of appropriate death. Accordingly, the ambitious Lord Bolingbroke expired in a rocket;—sly Mr. Hobbes hissed away his existence as a serpent;—and Voltaire, with an enormous band of his associates, were actually broken on a wheel.

My aunt gave Roger much credit for his device, and, in return, made him a present of a quarto Bible—in which I often hear him reading, with his own luminous comment, to the younger servants, in a voice which, with the utmost facility,

facility, reaches from one end of the house to the other.

And now, should there be any of my readers dissatisfied with the degree of information concerning myself, which I have thought it right to lay before them; and desirous of possessing some few general marks, by which they may, at least, be prevented from imputing this work to any innocent person; I cannot find it in my heart absolutely to deny their request.

If then, they should, in one of the most mountainous of our distant counties, discover an old squire, dwelling in a venerable mansion, which grandly looks over the woody vale, and limpid lake beneath—if they should find this retired person with an unusual quantity of silver hair; with an inclination of the shoulders greater, perhaps, than might be expected at sixty; with something of that expression which belongs to a countenance
where

where much happiness has succeeded to much trouble—If, moreover, they should find that he is a great reader of the Bible, though freely acknowledging and deeply feeling his imperfect compliance with its precepts—that he is a calm and modest interpreter of Scripture, holding what is plain, strongly; but what is difficult, humbly and charitably—that he is anxious rather to reconcile the good of various parties than to dictate to any—that he is a man of naturally quick temper, much subdued—a zealous promoter of religion, even by unpopular means—a prudent friend to Church and State, though a hater of bigotry in religion, and of corruption in courts—If, moreover, they should discover in him many infirmities; some, the result of natural constitution; some, of early habits; all daily diminishing, and all deeply, constantly, and loudly deplored by himself—If, also, they should detect in him a somewhat unaccountable repugnance to

to those short, pithy, sententious, oracular sayings, called “proverbs,” to which a large part of the world are disposed to render a most unqualified homage—If they should find all these circumstances concentrated in the same individual—then it is not improbable that they have met with the very individual for whom this memoir is designed—And if not, they have probably met with a better man, and therefore can have no reason to complain. More minutely it does not become me to speak.

But whilst I cannot persuade myself to yield to the wishes of the reader, in revealing the name of the author of this little work; I beg leave, in conclusion, most explicitly to state to them its moral. It is, then, its humble design to shew that mere human wisdom is very defective—that a large proportion of the most popular maxims are exceedingly unsafe—that many of them have a strong tendency

tendency to create a sordid and selfish character—that our principles of action are to be sought in the Bible—and, finally, that if any person desires to be singularly happy, he has only to pray and to labour to become eminently good.

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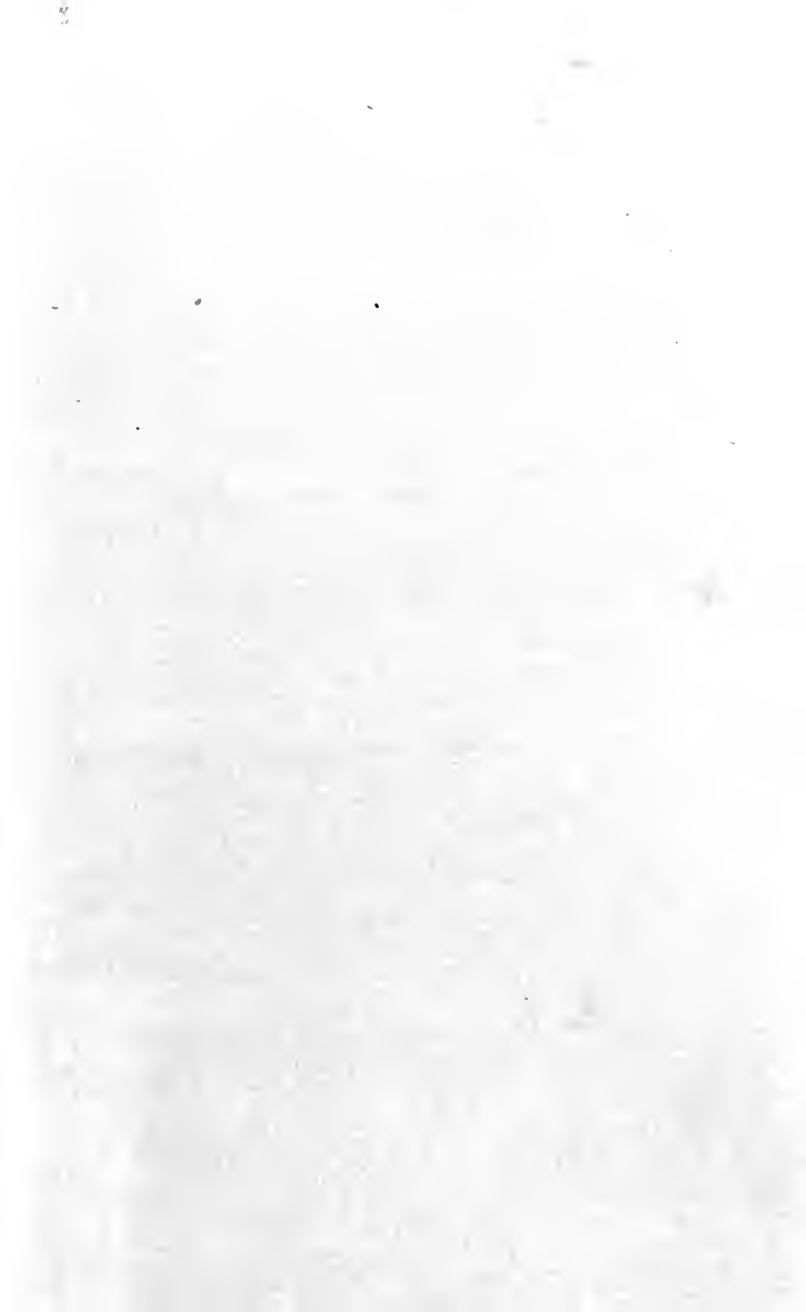
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